Community over class conscience over competition: A rationale for understanding the passage of the Second Reform Bill of 1867

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COMMUNITY OVER CLASS, CONSCIENCE OVER COMPETITION:
A RATIONALE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE
OF THE SECOND REFORM BILL OF 1867

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An examination of early historiography about England's Second Reform Bill of 1867 revealed that historians believed parliamentarians had succumbed to public pressure. Contemporary historiography discounted earlier theories and stressed the political implications of the bill's passage, including the Conservative party's belief that, by enfranchising part of the working class, it would become the majority party. Neither early nor contemporary theories seemed to answer satisfactorily the question, Why did parliamentarians accede to the passage of a reform bill in 1867 when they had resisted reform for 35 years? Further studies of Victorian literature indicated that an examination of newspapers, periodicals, novels, and histories which Victorians read would be valuable for two reasons. First, that literature would provide a picture of Victorian society as a whole and second, that literature, in the English literary tradition, sought to instruct its readers as well as amuse them.

The literature studied in this thesis included The Times, the Quarterly Review, The Edinburgh Review, Westminster Review, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, seven Victorian novels, and five histories. Two subjects were of interest: the political subject of parliamentary reform and the view of the working man. The results of the research were twofold. On the one hand, a picture of Victorian society was provided by noting the various interests which clashed over the subject of parliamentary reform. On the other hand, the predominant image of the working man portrayed in literature was that of a respectable man who deserved the governing class's trust and an innocent man who needed its guidance. As the conscience of the Victorian, I believe such literature provided parliamentarians with a principle on which to base their actions. That principle subordinated class divisions to the larger community of a homogeneous British nation, and that principle makes the parliamentarians' passage of the Second Reform Bill reasonable and appropriate.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Most modern historians do not ascribe to theories of historical determinism because they imply a mechanical theory of history, leaving no room for chance or man's free will. Over the centuries, historians have subscribed to various theories concerning the movement of history, from events that seem to propel men who are powerless to resist, to the cause-and-effect theory which often is translated into the corollary that great men move history. Modern historians try to avoid both extremes. There is, however, a tendency among historians to look at one instance in history and note that it was preceded by a concatenation of events which made that instance irrespressible, unavoidable, or bound to happen. The passing of the Second Reform Bill in 1867 is an example of this tendency, but it is my belief that none of the arguments presented in the historiography of the bill are strong enough to warrant historians' views that the Second Reform Bill was one of many steps in the inevitable march toward democracy.

Evidence of the sense of historical determinism which surrounded the Second Reform Bill may be discerned in surveys of the period. A contemporary, Spencer Walpole, wrote, "The fall of Hyde Park railings had swept away all resistance to democracy, and had made the passage of a new Reform Bill indispensable." Sidneym Low and Lloyd C. Sanders wrote:
The franchise bill of 1867 was the complement, the natural and indeed inevitable sequel, to the act of 1832. But even in English politics few great changes have come about with less evidence of principle and conviction on the part of those mainly concerned with it, with more appearance of opportunism and concession to the expediencies of the moment. It was difficult to be enthusiastic over a reform bill framed by a ministerial party which did not want reform, under pressure from an opposition which did not want the bill. But then both sides felt that an extension of the franchise was bound to come; and if the tories were pushed forward along a path they thought dangerous, the same may be said of the leading liberals. Disraeli probably took the step with much more sense of responsibility and belief in its necessity than most of his colleagues and his titular leader.2

According to Low and Sanders, the Second Reform Bill was an "inevitable sequel," members of Parliament "felt" that it "was bound to come," and Disraeli believed it was necessary. Sir J. A. R. Marriott wrote that the Conservatives introduced a reform bill in 1867 because "they had no choice."3 George Macaulay Trevelyan wrote that Derby and Disraeli "had to settle the franchise question, which was ... raging like a fever in the nation's blood."4 From these early surveys, the reader must come to the conclusion that British statesmen were forced to introduce a reform bill. Why they did so was explained in various ways.

Arthur Berriedale Keith stated that the people "demanded reform and the new ministry at the cost of the resignation of Lords Carnarvon, Cranborne, and General Peel decided that it must deal with reform."5 R. J. Evans also noted that in the public campaign for reform "over a thousand meetings were held, and it was clear that the Government would have to attempt the task which had brought down their opponents."6 The sense that reform was necessary was reiterated by R. B. McCallum in Elie Halevy's work. "The main problem of politics remained the vital question of Parliamentary Reform. Some changes would have to be
made. . . . Disraeli could not remain inactive. He saw that some broad measure was necessary." Public pressure seemed to be the primary motivating force for reform, although later surveys tempered the enthusiastic argument that the Second Reform Bill was a step on the march to democratization.

Asa Briggs listed a number of reasons why reform had become necessary.

From . . . [the] bare outline of events and proposals, some of the reasons why Derby and Disraeli produced a Reform Bill can be deduced. One reason was pressure from outside, a subsidiary factor but an important one in determining the timing of events. Disraeli's conversion to the belief that a Reform Bill was urgently necessary was influenced by statements made to him by his friends concerning 'the unanimity with which all classes . . . desire a Reform Bill--from Lord Shaftesbury to the Shropshire rustic.' The Reform League too was sufficiently influential for some writers to claim that the Hyde Park rioters really carried the Reform Bill of 1867.

More important than external pressure was the desire of the Conservative leaders to secure a comprehensive settlement. Reform had been toyed with for so many years: it now seemed possible to get the issue out of the way.

Brigg's assessment indicated that political considerations also were important in the decision to introduce reform. It was not long, however, before public agitation once more occupied the minds of historians. Sir Llewellyn Woodward concluded that

the attack [in the House of Commons] on the legal position of trade unions made the leaders of the working class realize the importance of direct representation in parliament, and the economic crisis of 1866 revived the almost forgotten agitation against aristocratic misgovernment. . . . [The disturbance at Hyde Park] convinced conservative opinion that electoral reform could not be delayed.

Derek Beales addressed the situation directly.

Historians have been especially interested in seeking an answer to the question: what part was played in the passage of the Act by public pressure? In the middle of the sixties Parliamentary reform had suddenly again become a popular cause. . . . It was the changed situation at Westminster, and a new
shift of mood in the country, away from complacent interest in foreign affairs, which made the essential difference.\textsuperscript{10}

Beales argued that political considerations and popular opinion played a part in the decision to introduce reform. By 1970, however, the emphasis was again on public pressure. J. R. Edwards cited economic difficulties which created social unrest, the activities of the Reform League, and the support of the trade unions. He concluded, "In support of the original bill Gladstone had said, 'You cannot fight against the future. . . . Great social forces are against you.' And so it was to prove."\textsuperscript{11}

Some of these historians emphasized one event over another. Some of them listed the chain of events. Most of them noted the public agitation. All of them concluded that, by 1867, a reform bill had become unavoidable because of the events which preceded the bill's introduction. Specific studies of the Second Reform Bill have similar theses.

Historians in the twentieth century who studied the Second Reform Bill have emphasized different aspects in order to explain the event. The central thesis of Joseph H. Park's monograph was that the urban artisan class exerted its power through trade unions, making its admission to political power inevitable. The chain of events leading to this conclusion began with events beyond England's shores which affected opinion in England and helped the cause of democracy, such as democratic actions in France and Germany, Garibaldi's visit to England, and the victory of the North in the American Civil War. The second link in the chain of events consisted of growing economic difficulties experienced by workingmen in 1866 and 1867. Finally, the
failure of the Liberal Bill in 1866 caused renewed public agitation. The Reform League entered into an alliance with the trade unions, and the League's influence was demonstrated by its ability to organize mass meetings.

As a result of these meetings, the Conservatives were forced to take up the matter of reform. Park noted that one question often was asked afterward: whose bill was it? Park dismissed the notion that William Gladstone, leader of the Liberal opposition, was the author of the bill. Neither did he believe its passage was due to the efforts of John Bright, Member of Parliament from Birmingham, a leader of the Anti-Corn Law League in the 1840s, and advocate of such radical reforms as universal manhood suffrage. Park noted that Benjamin Disraeli, the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, probably was more influential in securing its passage. Park added, however, that perhaps it was nobody's bill; perhaps it was more the result of public opinion, stirred up partly by economic and social conditions, partly by the Reform League, and partly by trade unions.

An article by Carl F. Brand, published a few years later, emphasized the role of the trade unions. "Truly, the trades . . . may congratulate themselves upon the abandonment of 'no politics' and their invaluable contribution toward the winning of the Second Reform Bill."\(^{12}\) Brand concluded that the political involvement of the trade unions increased public agitation which led to reform: "the grand demonstrations had won. Derby and Disraeli were converted."\(^{13}\)

Two articles by Francis H. Herrick tempered the democratic emphasis of earlier works. The first article argued that earlier interpretations had discrepancies. He concluded that "the Bill of
1867 should be studied primarily as a result of first, preceding proposals for reform, and second, the necessities of political parties.\(^1\) Earlier proposals reflected scholarly literature appearing around 1850 which focused attention "on the growth of institutions as something apart from the will of the people. . . . The legal system and parliament were the primary sources of English liberty."\(^2\)

Furthermore, Herrick argued that it should be noted the bill did unite Disraeli's party and secure his position and the two-party system.\(^3\)

These aspects were amplified in Herrick's second article.

Of the early proposals for reform, Herrick noted:

By this time [1860] every important member of the house of commons had supported some measure of parliamentary reform. This striking shift of opinion was due to many causes, but the most significant was a change in the theory of reform which made it acceptable to party leaders by freeing it both of the partisan character of 1832 and the extreme democracy of Chartism. Proposals for parliamentary reform made in these years sought to improve the electorate, while adding to its numbers, by creating special franchises for various educated and property holding groups. The official reform bills introduced in 1852, 1854, 1859 and 1860 were designed to secure a better representation of interests through a better electorate rather than to enfranchise the people as a whole.\(^4\)

In other words, parliamentarians sought only to adjust a system of representation that, on the whole, worked well. These adjustments did, however, have political ramifications.

With reform more a matter of political improvement than of democratic principle, party advantage admittedly played an important rôle in the preparation of government bills. . . . Would the numerous changes in any bill result in a net gain or loss for the party?\(^5\)

Herrick's argument emphasized the political expediency which made reform necessary and perhaps advantageous.
Marxian language is evident in an article by Trygve R. Tholfsen. Instead of class warfare, however, Tholfsen argued that class harmony enabled the democratization process to proceed.

By 1867 . . . there had grown into being in the industrial towns political attitudes and habits that enabled England to embark on her experiment in democratic government under conditions conducive to maximum stability. Working-class acceptance of middle-class leadership and ideology made certain that the newly democratized House of Commons would not have to deal with any really awkward economic and social questions. England's inchoate democracy was spared the strain that would have been caused by the demands of a less acquiescent working class.¹⁹

Tholfsen's tone almost is one of disgust; nevertheless, Herrick's political argument again had been replaced by a democratic argument.

While conceding that party calculations and rivalries were important and noting that perhaps workingmen were well behaved, Royden Harrison emphasized the threat posed by the agitation of labor.

In the eighteen sixties the British working class exhibited certain 'contradictory' characteristics. If it was increasingly 'respectable,' it was increasingly well organized. If it had abandoned its revolutionary ambitions, it had not wholly lost its revolutionary potentialities. It left no doubt that these potentialities might be speedily developed if it was long thwarted in its desire to secure political equality. In short, it had attained precisely that level of development at which it was safe to concede its enfranchisement and dangerous to withhold it. It was circumstance, rather than the death of Palmerston, which determined the timing of Reform.²⁰

Harrison attempted to explain an interesting contradiction. In order to be enfranchised, parliamentarians had to consider workingmen respectable. If workingmen took part in mass demonstrations, were they respectable? Harrison's conclusion was that workingmen displayed both qualities of respectability and revolution.

An article by Maurice Cowling formed a footnote to the larger chain of events and indicated an increasing tendency to focus on parliamentarians. It was Cowling's conclusion that Derby's attempt
to form a coalition government in 1866 was opposed by Disraeli, who only went through the motions indicating that he would step down to make such a coalition possible. In actuality, Disraeli realized that, in the event of a coalition government, his career would be jeopardized.

J. P. D. Dunbabin's article added to the political aspect of the passage of the Second Reform Bill.

The twenty-year period of Conservative ascendancy after 1885 could never have come about without the Home Rule crisis, and was in many ways more fortuitous and insubstantial than it has seemed in retrospect. But, if the above suggestions are accepted, the period between the Second and Third Reform Acts saw the laying of its foundations. For, firstly, the Conservative party had emerged as electorally the more stable of the two. Its vote increased continuously while that of the Liberals fluctuated; and the number of Liberal M.P.s returned unopposed fell steadily, whereas that of Conservatives in the same fortunate condition varied with Liberal strength. . . . Secondly, by 1885-[188]6 the Conservatives had established a position of equality with the Liberals in the English boroughs. This was important, since the 17,500+ constituencies had contained about half the votes of the Second Reform Act electorate, and accounted for a very substantial fraction even of that under the third. Lastly, the redistribution accompanying this act further benefited the Conservatives. That this would be the case, they recognized in advance.  

Dunbabin's argument indicates that the Conservatives introduced a reform bill in order to gain a political advantage over their adversaries. An article published in 1967, however, disputed Dunbabin's findings when Norman McCord argued that none of the three reform acts were based on accurate information; they were, therefore, "imperfect agents." McCord noted that if parliamentarians had known what the effects would be, the process of reform would have taken longer and been more bitter. On the one hand then, Conservatives could not have been sure that their reform bill would be as advantageous to them as later studies proved. On the other hand, Liberals could not have
known either. This perhaps explains the ease and rapidity of the Second Reform Bill's passage.

Another passage which aided the Second Reform Bill's passage was noted by James Winter. He sought to answer three questions: who were the men in the Cave of Adullam, why were they there, and what role did the cave play in helping Disraeli pass the Second Reform Bill? He concluded that the men of the cave came from a variety of backgrounds and were there for a variety of reasons, and that

among them, and most significant for future events, was a genuine desire to find some principle for constitutional reform, some formula which would allow the working classes representation without 'swamping' in the process the minority of wealthy and educated.24

Furthermore, the cave played a secondary, yet crucial role in the passage of the bill when 25 Adullamites sided with Disraeli to give him a victory over Gladstone's motion to substitute a simple £5 rating figure as a basis for the borough franchise.25 Readers of Winter's article conclude that men of principle, those in the cave, were used by the Conservatives to secure a political victory. Gertrude Himmelfarb's article disputed that finding.

Himmelfarb argued that the Conservatives were men of principle. She asserted that there was nothing strange in the passing of a reform bill by Conservatives. One of the principles of the Conservatives was that the aristocracy and the working class were natural allies. Disraeli was not worried about the Radical amendments to his bill because he knew the workingmen would defer to their superiors. At the same time,

there was an additional impetus towards democracy in the Tory creed. This came from the belief that the lower classes were not
only naturally Conservative in temperament but also naturally Conservative in politics. Thus the party had a practical interest as well as a philosophical disposition towards democracy. The Tories were democratic, one might say, because they assumed the demos was Tory.\(^{26}\)

Himmelfarb's conclusion was that the Conservatives took up the matter of reform for political reasons and principles.

F. B. Smith's monograph, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill*, indicated the growing importance of the political argument. A major portion of the book dealt with the maneuvers in Parliament. Smith concluded that the Second Reform Bill was passed because a majority of parliamentarians dared not throw it out. They dared not because of the mass agitation after the defeat of the Liberal Bill, because Disraeli had resolved that a reform bill would be passed in order to consolidate his leadership and humiliate Gladstone, and because of a mixture of boredom and confusion among parliamentarians.

Smith's chain of events began with the emergence of a labor aristocracy in the 1850s. At that time, Parliament still was aristocratic. From 1851 to 1865, reform bills were introduced, but governments had to give them up or go down with them. Public indifference to reform marked that period. Palmerston's death in 1865 cleared the way for further efforts and, when the Liberal Bill of 1866 failed to pass, public demonstrations followed. The Reform League gave members a sense of their social value, a sense of the inevitability of reform, and trained its members in orderly mass meetings. The Conservatives were convinced, and Disraeli pushed the bill through Parliament.
D. C. Moore argued that earlier interpretations which found parliamentarians bowing to public pressure were mistaken. In discussing the Act, Sir Llewellyn Woodward declares, 'the strength of the whigs and their services to the country . . . lay in their view that concession to a sustained popular demand was the wisest policy for a governing aristocracy.' This concession theory has had a long life. It has functioned well. But it is high time to distinguish between its polemical function and its viability as an analytical tool. The British aristocracy and gentry were fortunate both in their apologists and their situation: they could adapt the political structure of the kingdom to perpetuate their own power while placating their social rivals. 27

Moore concluded that a sociological premise allowed the passage of the Second Reform Bill. The goal of parliamentarians, which never was fully achieved, was to make such constituency into a homogeneous social community.

What both groups [of reformers in the 1830s and 1860s] tried to do was use such legal tools as the redistribution of seats, the redrawing of constituency boundaries, and the franchise, to fashion each constituency according to an ideal model, a model defined by the predominant type of face-to-face community it would contain. It was confidence in the social cohesion of these communities, not confidence in the wisdom of the individual, which made reform possible in the thirties and again in the sixties. 28

Moore's sociological argument appears to be an aberration in the historiography of the Second Reform Bill. His thesis was not considered by other historians; their arguments continued to emphasize political motives or principles.

Maurice Cowling's monograph, 1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution, was perhaps the logical culmination of the growing tendency of historians to see the passage of the Second Reform Bill as an episode in party politics. Cowling denied any connection between events outside of Parliament and the passage of the bill. He argued that earlier interpretations did not consider the conservative nature of
Parliament or the reactions of the leading protagonists to one another.

Reform

was proposed by the Conservative leaders, and supported by the Conservative party, because they had convinced themselves that it would not only significantly alter the existing political structure, but would also give the Conservative party specific electoral advantages and a settlement of the question for the future.

With Cowling's book, the historiography of the Second Reform Bill has come 180° from emphasizing pure democratic principles to pure party politics. Do any of these arguments substantiate the claim of inevitability? Certainly a consensus among historians indicates that once Disraeli introduced a reform bill, his shrewd political maneuvering ensured that the bill would be passed. But why did he introduce it? Why did the members of Parliament acquiesce in 1867 when they had refused to do so since 1832? It does not seem that these historians' interpretations warrant a sense of inevitability.

For example, when the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, there was no talk that this was but the first step in a series toward democratization. Lord John Russell certainly thought that the bill would be the final adjustment which the constitution needed, and his opinion probably reflected the attitudes of Parliament colleagues. Years passed before it was realized that the Reform Bill of 1832 had not accomplished all that its supporters had thought it would.

The Chartists perhaps were the first to realize the defects of the Reform Bill of 1832; they have been cited as precursors to the Reform League of the 1860s. Discontented with the results of that bill, the Chartist movement has been characterized as a moral crusade to persuade those in power that it was their moral duty to change
things. Sweeping reforms were advocated, including annual parliaments, universal male suffrage, an equalization of electoral districts, a removal of property qualifications for house members, payment for members of Parliament, and a secret ballot.

The similarities between the Chartists and the Reform League are striking. Both were formed in times of economic distress: the Chartists grew out of the London Workingmen's Association and the Reform League was supported by trade unions. Both held a number of mass meetings and both impressed the members of other classes with their restrained behavior at those meetings. Why did the Chartists fail?

Perhaps one reason can be discerned by looking at Parliament's earlier behavior. After the Napoleonic War ended, Britain was besieged by economic difficulties. The people thought that Parliament was controlling prices for its benefit, and public agitation followed. Reform, which had been considered by Parliament before the war, was set aside because of the agitation. Parliamentarians would not allow themselves or the country to be coerced into action. Public agitation did not promote parliamentary reform early in the century, in the middle of the century, or in 1867. As Maurice Cowling noted, "Parliament in the sixties was not afraid of public agitation: nor was its action determined by it."30 Francis Herrick put it another way when he wrote about the Hyde Park riots: "Why should a demonstration on July 23, 1866, which only damaged an old fence and some shrubbery, have much effect on parliament when it assembled in February, 1867?"31
Another reason why the Chartists failed can be seen in Parliament's earlier behavior. Parliamentarians viewed the French Revolution as a situation wherein moderate reforms had escalated into a revolution. In 1848, revolutions on the continent created new fears in England. To carry the influence of foreign affairs further, could it be possible that democratic movements in France, Italy, and Germany could persuade British parliamentarians in 1867 to carry out their own process of democratization? It does not seem likely. Robert Kelley wrote:

> By the midcentury period, they [the British] smugly contrasted their Victorian calm and prosperity with the revolutions, disorder, and infidelity that seemed to run rampant across the Channel. Their pride in themselves, their complacency and their insular prejudice against anything continental became deeply rooted national characteristics.³²

Another foreign event, the American Civil War, has been cited as influential, but the Civil War was confusing to Britons. Was the Civil War a matter of preserving the Union or abolishing slavery? Furthermore, relations between the two countries did not lend themselves to promoting the American cause to British statesmen, as the Alabama claims illustrate. Finally, the aristocracy, or most of those in Parliament, favored the South. Foreign events worked against reform early in the century, in the middle of the century, and in 1867.

British parliamentarians would reform only when the country was quiet and when there was no chance of matters escalating into a revolution. When they reformed they would do it sensibly, and in order to preserve not destroy. It was this attitude that doomed the Chartists to failure. As John W. Derry remarked, the Chartists "were
regarded as intent upon the subversion of the Constitution, and to grant one item of the Charter would be the first step towards accepting the whole. After noting some of the reasons why the Chartists failed, it now seems remarkable that the Reform League succeeded. Or did it? Parliament's earlier behavior suggests that the Reform League had little to do with the parliamentarians' decision to pass a reform bill.

Lord Palmerston's death and the resulting realignment of parties began the process which would allow Disraeli and Derby to successfully maneuver the bill through Parliament. Historians generally agree that Disraeli's motives included his desire to consolidate his party and further his career. It also is evident that Disraeli considered a reform bill to be necessary. Why? Once again, it has to be said that the events which historians have suggested do not answer the question. Was it possible that Parliament was acting totally out of character, that it had changed that much from earlier events? How could it when it has been conceded that cabinet posts still were filled by the ruling families and Parliament still was aristocratic? In the 1850s, a labor aristocracy composed of artisans, or skilled workingmen, had emerged. That was the reality of the situation, but the reality meant nothing unless those in power perceived that reality.

The argument that Parliament passed a reform bill because of the inevitability of democracy in Britain is not credible. What was democracy to the British? John Stuart Mill was no Conservative and yet, in an article by J. H. Burns, Mill's conception of democracy certainly was not the concept early historians described.

Two distinctions are essential to Mill's theory. First, the distinction between true and false democracy. The latter, by
distorting the representative system in favour of the majority, is a travesty of democracy; and this can be corrected only by adequate proportional representation of minorities. But there still remains the second distinction—between democracy, however true, and properly representative government. Democracy in the last resort fails by Mill's standards because it rests on an assumption which ran counter to all that he had believed and preached for thirty years—the assumption that men are equal in the moral and intellectual qualities required by the exercise of political power.34

British statesmen believed that only those who possessed particular qualities should be allowed to take part in the system of representation.

To Americans, the British electoral system is baffling at best; an explanation of that system of representation might be helpful. In 1832 and 1867, parliamentarians attempted to base their actions on concrete proof of admissibility. To them, specified property qualifications demonstrated that a man was hard working and the possessor of a necessary trait of respectability. For example, the Reform Bill of 1832 lowered the franchise so that a man who paid a rent of £10 could vote. The result was the inclusion of most of the middle class into the governmental system. As the country became more prosperous, however, deflation kept the working class from meeting the prescribed property qualifications. A political battle began over how to resolve the problem.

The argument that the Second Reform Bill was passed for political reasons is hard to dispute; yet, was its passage a matter of politics only? Robert Blake wrote, "Disraeli was an opportunist, but all politicians are so in some degree. If they do not adapt themselves to changing times they soon become antediluvian survivals, incapable of affecting events."35 The party system in Britain was in its infancy in 1867. The Conservatives occasionally were referred to
by the old party designation, Tories, and the Liberals occasionally were called Whigs. The emergence of strong leaders, such as Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston, had caused party lines to blur in the 1840s and 1850s, as followers coalesced behind a figure. The organization of district party members to promote the registration of voters had only begun in the 1840s, mainly in response to groups which formed for a specific purpose such as the Anti-Corn Law League.

In 1867, two men dominated their respective parties: William Gladstone led the Liberal party and Benjamin Disraeli, under Prime Minister Derby, led the Conservatives. The personal antagonism between Disraeli and Gladstone has been suggested as the reason for the major reforms of the Second Reform Bill of 1867; Disraeli would allow any amendment to be passed as long as it was not Gladstone's suggestion, leaving the field open to more radical amendments. Radicalism was not, however, the hallmark of either major party.

While some sentiments might differentiate a Liberal from a Conservative, parliamentarians in 1867 were, first of all, British. Moderation guided their actions. They were sensible enough to realize that, as prosperity increased, further reforms were necessary to include a class which was rising to meet the necessary property qualification but which was held down by economic fluctuations. Furthermore, the leaders hoped that workers would be grateful enough to that party which enfranchised them to vote for its representatives and make it the majority party. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, the two major parties had jockied for that position; each wanted to be the enfranchiser of the workers and enjoy the benefits of that
action. To lower the franchise too much would, however, repudiate the parliamentarians' sense of tradition and moderation and subject them to the charge that they had given in to radical reformers such as John Bright. Parliamentarians were British statesmen above all, making the argument inappropriate that the Second Reform Bill was passed purely for political reasons.

British statesmen believed that only those who demonstrated the intellectual and moral qualities required should be allowed to participate in the system. Disraeli and the Conservative party and most parliamentarians had, no doubt, come to believe that the artisans met those qualifications. While words were easy for British parliamentarians, actions were more difficult. The passage of the Second Reform Bill was proof of a new attitude. This change in attitude made contemporaries of the Second Reform Bill believe that reform was inevitable. Historians discerned a contemporary sense of inevitability and tried to explain, in logical sequence, what actually was a new state of mind.

I have studied the literature which the governing class of England read in an attempt to establish whether or not this literature contributed to the new state of mind displayed by parliamentarians in their passage of the Second Reform Bill. Four questions had to be answered before I could proceed with that study. Who were members of the governing class? Why study literature? What kind of literature? How could I discover the effect of literature on someone's actions or, in a general sense, how was it possible to ascertain motivation and explore that nebulous region, the state of someone's mind? It now is
time to take a deep breath, pause, define terms, answer the questions, and lay a foundation for what might otherwise be considered castles in the air.

Considering the last question first, I must limit the influence literature had on parliamentarians. I understand that thousands of possibilities exist which might explain the parliamentarians' motivation in passing the Second Reform Bill. As individuals, for example, they might have been prompted to vote for the bill by such unrecorded events as the passing remark of a friend or because their moods were changing along with the weather. Yet the passage of the Second Reform Bill was a long, drawn-out process; the passing humor of a single day could not have sustained parliamentarians. Perhaps the exhilaration of the gathering momentum spurred them on to complete the process. As noted earlier, the possibilities are endless and, while some might have been caught up in the excitement, it must be true that most parliamentarians deeply felt the responsibility of their actions.

While it may not be possible to ascertain all of the influences which prompted parliamentarians to consider the urban artisan class a viable candidate for enfranchisement, it is possible to study one element and consider its influence. This does not establish a cause-effect relationship, as Robert Kelley noted.

Few things are more elusive, as David Hume long ago established, than what causes something else. I agree with William Dray, rather, that knowing a man's religion, or his personality, or his setting gives us instead something else: a basis for understanding his actions as reasonable and appropriate. We secure from these considerations not a closed system of cause and effect, but rationales for understanding.
I submit that the literature which the governing class read, discussed, argued about, and contributed to provides a rationale for understanding why its members permitted the enfranchisement of the urban artisan class. Several studies have been done on the workingman. It should be noted, however, that this is a study of the governing class's perception of that working class, a perception not necessarily grounded in reality but based on its members' perception of the reality as portrayed in literature.

In order to delineate the appropriate kind of literature which should be studied, it first is necessary to define who were members of the governing class. I noted earlier that Parliament still was basically aristocratic. F. M. L. Thompson wrote that "in politics, church and army . . . England remained, down to 1914, or more precisely until 1922, not merely an aristocratic country, but a country of a landed aristocracy." He also said that "nobles were above all great landowners, but by no means all great landowners were noblemen." The Reform Bill of 1832 had not accomplished all that its supporters had supposed it would, but it allowed the middle class to make inroads into the places of power.

Barry Supple explained:

In the House of Commons the landed classes were in the majority until the late 1880s, and even then continued to dominate late Victorian governments (the aristocracy by birth provided 60 per cent of Cabinet members in 1867-1884 and 58 per cent of 1885-1905). . . . On the other hand, there was a sense in which the rule of the upper classes was on suffrangi--dependent on carrying out reforms and policy innovations and on a sensitive responsiveness to public opinion, particularly middle-class opinion. . . . In effect, reform meant power-sharing, and the new role of the middle class and the maintenance of aristocratic influence and privilege went hand in hand.
An important reason for this compromise was the fact that the rising middle classes . . . often based their reforming zeal on an objection not so much to the aristocracy as to the exclusive character of aristocratic privileges.\(^{39}\)

Thompson concurred:

The landed interest continued to hold sway politically by grace of the middle classes, whose ultimate reserve of political power was enshrined in their enfranchisement in 1832, and was reflected not in the composition of the House but in the course of legislation. The landed M.P.s of the 1860s, and still more of the 1870s, formed a thin upper crust resting on a middle class electorate, whose power to thrust them aside was already in existence even if it as yet lay dormant and unused.\(^{40}\)

According to these writers, the governing class consisted of the aristocracy and those members of the middle class who wished to share in their power.

Perhaps the role of the middle class has not been emphasized because its members imitated the manners of the aristocracy, as the brisk sale of etiquette books indicates. That aristocracy was described by Thompson.

The landed aristocrats had much in common besides the possession of large landed estates. Their upbringing, way of life, family setting, occupations, avocations, social outlook and political beliefs, though certainly not conforming to any rigid or stereotyped pattern, were all shaped by a readily identifiable mould. They formed a loosely-knit club whose unwritten rules ensured that all members were gentlemen, and it was they above all who formed the standards of gentlemanly conduct. . . . The starchy idolization of etiquette belongs to the aspirants, the new genteel, somewhat uncertain of their position.\(^{41}\)

"Gentlemanly conduct" included many things, among them "connoisseurship and patronage of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature or scholarship was widespread, generally informed by a discriminating taste which left great riches to posterity."\(^{42}\)
If the middle class could not afford to imitate the aristocracy in regard to patronage, its influence was not unfelt in the area of literature.

As government policy became more responsive to responsible opinion, from the middle 1820s onwards, an increasing influence passed to the opinion-forming bodies. The landed interest was certainly not unrepresented in the powerful field of the serious London and provincial press or the quarterly reviews, but it was a field in which the intellectuals and professional men were dominant.

The governing class as a whole contributed to literature not only with monetary support but also through its participation in the field as a vehicle for the promotion of ideas. The relationship between the governing class and literature was mutually interactive.

Authors, whether or not a living is made solely by writing, want to sell their books. For nineteenth-century authors, difficulties existed which made the aristocracy and the middle class important as a means by which these books could be sold. John W. Dodds wrote about the period from 1841 to 1851:

There were several factors controlling the distribution of books. The size of the reading public beyond the newspapers and cheap magazines was limited. Out of a total population of over 18,000,000, 40 per cent of the adults could not write their own names. Moreover, the cost of a standard three-decker novel was 3ls. 6d.—astronomical enough to keep it off the shelves of any but the well-to-do.

The cost of books inhibited their sale, and Dodd's comment on the problem of illiteracy was reiterated by Richard D. Altick.

Throughout the nineteenth century only children of the upper and middle classes were to be found in the private or proprietary academies and 'colleges' and the endowed grammar schools which provided education beyond the rudiments.

The governing class possessed two necessary attributes which made it important to literature: its members could read and they had the means to purchase books.
This class also possessed a third attribute: members of the governing class had time to read. Richard Altick stated,

Obviously, one cannot read without some leisure in which to do so. Leisure has never been equitably distributed in any civilized society, but in nineteenth-century England it was allotted with particular unevenness.\textsuperscript{6}

To whom was leisure allotted? Predictably, the aristocracy had its share. Stella Margetson wrote, "Leisure among the upper classes was a rule of life; no gentleman ever boasted of doing anything, no lady ever wanted to be caught doing what could be done for her."\textsuperscript{7} At the same time, those members of the middle class who have been described as part of the governing class also had time for literature. Altick wrote, "Only the relatively well-to-do minority of the middle class, the merchants, bankers, professional men, manufacturers, and so on, could spend full evenings with their families and their books."\textsuperscript{8} According to Amy Cruse, these middle class readers were the salvation of authors.

The Philistines [Matthew Arnold's term for the middle class] were great readers, in quantity if not in quality. When any book had an exceptionally large sale it is safe to say that this was due to the middle class, for among the two other classes there were not nearly enough readers to provide buyers in such numbers. It was the Philistines who sent up Dickens' circulation to amazing heights.\textsuperscript{9}

Among the two remaining classes, the ordinary man was hindered by the cost of books, his illiteracy, his lack of leisure time, the difficulties involved in borrowing books, and a prejudice against literature as a frivolous pastime. It was, therefore, the governing class, consisting of the upper and middle classes, which was important to literature--and four forms of literature were most popular with its members.
Newspapers lead the list of the most popular form of literature, and writers agree on which newspapers were the most widely read. John W. Dodds wrote,

In terms of prestige as well as of circulation, there was of course just one paper, the Times. It grew from an average daily circulation of 21,000 in 1842 to 38,019 in 1850—the latter figure being almost twice that of all its seven daily competitors put together.50

Carl Dawson added that "among the daily papers, of which London alone had over a hundred, the Times was the dean of respectable journalism and the Morning Chronicle, though in its final years, perhaps the most vigorous inquirer."51 Dodds also wrote about the newspapers which came after the Times in popularity:

The Morning Chronicle (1850 circulation: 3,000) also had great political influence; Palmerston used it against the Times. But what the Times was to the upper classes, the new Daily News (circulation: 4,000) was to the middle classes.52

It is clear that in circulation and in potential for influence, newspapers cannot be deleted from a study of the governing class.

George Levine stated that the quarterly reviews also were influential in regard to the governing class.

Every class had its periodicals to define and defend its aims and to view the spirit of the age from its own special angle. The Edinburgh Review, founded in 1802, was the spokesman for the great Whig families; the Quarterly Review, founded in 1809 to do battle with the Edinburgh, represented the Tories and landed aristocracy; the Westminster Review, founded to do battle with both, became the spokesman for the middle-class philosophical radicals, like Bentham and James Mill.53

Carl Dawson, writing about English literature in 1850, also found the quarterly reviews to be influential.

The Edinburgh and Quarterly continued to flourish, if not quite with their old energy, and so did Blackwood's, the Westminster (soon to be edited by George Eliot), and the two powerful weeklies, the Spectator and the Athenaeum. The Athenaeum, that 'mirror of
Again, circulation figures and potential for influence necessitate the inclusion of periodicals in this study.

The mid-Victorian period is perhaps best known for its novelists. Levine wrote:

Perhaps most striking, two art forms were achieving great popularity—the autobiography and the novel. Popular taste was inclining to realism, toward a literature that dwelt on the facts of contemporary life. . . . The kinship between autobiography and novel was made clear during the Victorian age proper in such famous semiautobiographical novels as Dickens' *David Copperfield*, Thackeray's *Pendennis*, and George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*.

Interestingly, he added that "the characteristic Victorian novel is one in which the hero is rather an ordinary man, at least in his circumstances, and as an individual relatively powerless to shape his own fate."  

Amy Cruse concurred in Levine's stress upon the autobiography. She wrote that

the great interest of *Pendennis* lay in its autobiographical element. . . . Some liked *Pendennis* even better than *Vanity Fair*, and it roused Thackeray's fame to a height which approached, though it did not reach, that of Dickens.

Cruse's comment makes the reader wonder—who were the most popular novelists? Cruse answered that question:

The Victorians, like other mortals, made mistakes, and the best-seller was in their, as in every, age not necessarily the best from any other point of view. Still, after the strictest tests have been applied there remain the splendid four—Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot; and in a lower class, not of the greatest, but certainly of the great, Anthony Trollope, Charles Kingsley, and Elizabeth Gaskell.

When we turn to consider the readers of these novelists' works, we are driven at once to the conclusion that the majority of them came from the hosts of the Philistines. It is clearly a
question of numbers, and the records of copies sold put the fact beyond dispute, even though other evidence is scanty. 58

John W. Dodds also wrote about Dickens's and Thackeray's popularity.

Dickens, of course, was the Great Novelist of the time, with Thackeray, in point of general popularity, panting behind a poor second. While *Dombey and Son* was selling its 30,000 copies per monthly issue in 1846–1848, *Vanity Fair* did no better than 7,000. Dickens had become the national literary hero while Thackeray had been struggling anonymously in the magazines as Michael Angelo Titmarsh. Not until *Vanity Fair* did Thackeray begin to hear himself mentioned in the same breath with Dickens, and then only by the relatively few and perceptive. 59

If the Victorians did not always read what later critics would deem great, they certainly paid due homage to their greatest novelists.

Finally, a fourth form of literature cannot be ignored. History was as popular as any novel, and the historians of the nineteenth century were as famous and revered as any novelist. Levine wrote:

History became the third of the major Victorian genres, along with autobiography and the novel. Many of the most famous Victorian writers were primarily historians, as, for example, Carlyle, Macaulay and J. A. Froude. If these historians were not terribly 'scientific' or 'objective,' and if they took liberties with dialogue and dramatized excessively, they nevertheless were extremely important to the furtherance of historical inquiry. The novelistic qualities of their histories, moreover, suggest that historical writing, as well as autobiography and fiction, grew out of the age's interest in the real and, paradoxically, in the present. Those qualities helped too, incidentally, in making their histories among the most readable (or at least most interesting) ever written. 60

This last form of literature completes the list of those forms which were the most popular and which had the best potential for influencing the members of the governing class. Richard Altick, whose book was concerned with the reading habits of the common man, summed it best when he wrote that the reading public studied in his book was
not the relatively small, intellectually and socially superior audience for which most of the great nineteenth-century authors wrote—the readers of the quarterly reviews, the people whom writers like Macaulay, the Brontës, Meredith, George Eliot, and John Stuart Mill had in mind. For the purposes of this study, however, those are the exact authors who need to be studied, and it is evident that they be followed in the tradition of earlier English literature.

In the fourteenth century, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Tales of Canterbury* wherein a band of travelers began a contest of storytelling.

>This is the poynt, to spoken short and pleyn,  
That ech of yow, to shorte with oure wye,  
In this viage shal telle tales tweye  
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,  
And homward he shal tellen othere two,  
Of adventures that whilom han bifalle.  
And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,  
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas  
Tales of best sentence and moost solaas,  
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost  
Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,  
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.

Stories of "best sentence and moost solaas," or stories that instruct and amuse, have been a part of English literature for centuries. Clarence Decker wrote,

>It may . . . be asserted that English novelists generally have told their stories with avowed moral intentions. . . . The obligation 'to teach and delight' runs like a leitmotiv through the prefaces, forwards, prologues, and critical writings of English storytellers from the earliest times.

The writers of the nineteenth century were no exception to this tradition.

>Industrialization and urbanization created new problems for old political, social, and economic structures, as well as being positive forces for growth and opportunity. George Levine's book
contained essays written from 1824 to 1837 by various nineteenth-century writers. He noted that those essays "illustrate something of the enormous expansion of self-consciousness that was leading to the first serious and sustained analyses of industrial society and its malaises." Writers sought to create an awareness and, from that awareness, hoped to instigate reforms. Amy Cruse wrote,

> The stream of social novels continued throughout the fifties, and helped to keep the national conscience active. Real efforts were made to bring about a better state of things. Many abuses were reformed. Factory Acts and other legislation improved the condition of the workers. That much of this was due to the influence of books was owned by everybody. Dickens' public was an enormous one, and his popularity with all classes was, in itself, a means of bringing rich and poor into sympathy.

These writers attributed social reform to the influence of literature.

Considering the difficulties inherent in ascribing motivation, it is interesting to find parliamentary reform also attributed to the influence of literature. Richard Altick stated:

> Behind the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867, which were formal landmarks in the political transformation of England, lay the press and its steadily enlarging public. Despite the high prices necessitated by taxation . . . the newspaper press . . . became a forthright, independent mouthpiece of middle class opinion and eventually brought about the transfer of power to that class during the early Victorian era. At the same time the philippics of Cobbett in his Political Register and the brutal parodies of William Hone, which aroused the workingman from his political apathy, paved the way for a radical press that endured persecution and suppression to undermine, in turn, the foundations of middle-class rule. The hard-hitting political commentary of mass-circulation weekly newspapers conducted by men like Edward Lloyd and G. W. M. Reynolds helped build up the pressure which, after the middle of the century, forced the governing class to concede more and more power to the artisan and laborer.

Altick's view is an extension of early historiography which concluded that Parliament bowed to the pressures of the people. While I believe that parliamentarians enfranchised the artisans for political
reasons, and because their view of the artisan class had changed, the idea that literature served as an impetus for parliamentary reform is encouraging. Furthermore, Thompson concluded that the notion the aristocracy could not change on its own was unfounded. He wrote that

while the social and political order which was enshrined in this life no longer survives, it did in itself through its blend of exclusiveness and catholicity help to give birth to new social forms, which survive as a witness to the capacity of the stately aristocratic life to germinate the seeds of change.67

These secondary sources have not proven that literature contributed to the new state of mind exhibited by the governing class in its passage of the Second Reform Bill. They have, however, defined the governing class as composed of the aristocracy and the middle class. They have indicated that literature was a part of the governing class's life, and that the most popular forms of literature were newspapers, periodicals, novels, and history. Finally, they have indicated that the literature of the nineteenth century was a part of the English tradition. While literature amused, it also instructed and, in doing so, became the conscience of the Victorian--pointing out the areas where reform was needed. If these sources have not proven the validity of my proposal, they have at least indicated that further study is warranted. An examination of Victorian literature raises some final questions.

First, the chapters which follow are studies of particular forms of literature in order to elicit the image each presents of the workingman. It does not help readers, therefore, when that literature is vague in the terms used. When readers put down a newspaper or book, what perceptions have they received about the
workingman when the workingman has not been named specifically? Certainly, perceptions are colored by individual experiences. At the same time, however, writers want to convey particular messages; they do not want to give readers an option of putting individual meanings to the writers' works. Writers, therefore, utilize all their skills to convince and persuade readers to agree with their arguments.

It especially is advantageous that this is a study of Victorian literature because Victorian writers had a habit of intruding into their stories and making personal comments to the readers, comments designed to ensure that the readers were receiving the correct perceptions. With close reading, it is possible to ascertain those perceptions. With that in mind, it matters little whether or not the writers speak of a laborer, artisan, or peasant. What matters is the context in which the references are made. For example, if a writer compares a nobleman with a peasant, it is possible, if that is the writer's intent, that readers will translate that comparison into those who are members of the governing class and those who are not. Thus the parliamentarians put down their books with an image of workingmen as those who were members of that vast, amorphous, impersonal mass, recognized by those parliamentarians as those who were not of the governing class.

Other questions come to mind. For example, all of the literature examined for this work was written before the Second Reform Bill of 1867, but several were published many years before and some many decades before. How could that literature influence parliamentarians in 1867? Its influence can be seen because the parliamentarians quoted writers long after their works had been
published, and many of those writers are quoted today. Literature
dured not only because Victorians bound their books in leather but
because they remembered what was written in those books. Finally, and
related to the first question about time, many of the stories contained
in the novels and many of the histories were about other times, not the
nineteenth century. This point may be tempered because, while an
author may place a story in another time and a historian may be writing
about other centuries, their ideas, formed by current events,
superimpose themselves on their stories. Furthermore, those current
notions often are interspersed in the midst of discussion about
similar events, as Victorian writers were wont to do.

Having discussed the major questions that came to my mind, an
examination of Victorian literature may proceed. It is evident that
the relationship between society and literature is mutually interactive;
literature reflects and influences society. As a follower and a leader,
therefore, a study of literature is valuable in two ways. First,
those who look at Victorian society from afar may be able to catch a
glimpse of that society through the comments and views of Victorian
writers—the clashing of various interests over the political question
of reform, for example.

Second, if one is able to put oneself in a Victorian reader's
place, it may be possible to ascertain what writers were trying to
teach. If literature was the conscience of the Victorian, that
conscience was trying to say that the differences were small matters
because all were British, the workingmen no less so, therefore the
workingmen deserved to take part in their government.
CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES


13Ibid., p. 269.

15 Ibid., p. 226.

16 Ibid., p. 229.


18 Ibid., p. 188.


23 Ibid.


25 Ibid., p. 54.


28 Ibid., p. 59.


30 Ibid., p. 3.


40 Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 278.


48 Altick, *op. cit.*, p. 86.


50 Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 106.


52 Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

54 Dawson, loc. cit.

55 Levine, op. cit., p. 10.

56 Ibid.

57 Cruse, op. cit., p. 266.

58 Ibid., p. 260.

59 Dodds, op. cit., p. 366.

60 Levine, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

61 Altick, op. cit., pp. 6-7.


64 Levine, op. cit., p. 3.

65 Cruse, op. cit., p. 147.

66 Altick, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

67 Thompson, op. cit., p. 108.
Chapter 2

HUMANITARIANS AND REALISTS

One might expect those forms of literature which were advocates of reform to associate an image of integrity with the worker. At the same time, those works of literature which were against reform logically would discredit the worker's qualification to take part in the government. Such was not the case; thus, in order to understand the two opposing forces in this chapter, a description of the Quarterly Review and The Times is necessary.

Contemporary opinions may influence one's view about newspapers. The cynic regards all newspapers as being biased, tied politically to a particular persuasion. The men who published The Times made certain that that did not happen. Its editor, John T. Delane, wished to fulfill two purposes: to maintain it as "the best mirror of events and as an unrivalled barometer of national feeling." The tradition of The Times as established by Delane, John Walter III its chief proprietor, and Mowbray Morris its editor, was "to make a newspaper fit to be read by a serious, intelligent and discriminating English gentlemen."2

In order to fulfill these goals, The Times was not allowed to be a mouthpiece for one political party but took its position as the defender of the downtrodden, reflecting the opinions of the people. As the defender of the people, the tone of editorials in The Times often was one of indignation as the journalists vented their anger.
at the injustice of claims that the workingman was not respectable. Such anger did not go unnoticed. The Times was the most widely circulated daily paper in London: from 1862 to 1867, its average daily sales were 63,000 copies a day. When Parliament was in session, most of that paper was devoted to a word-for-word account of the debates in Parliament. It is clear that The Times fulfilled its goals; it was an educated gentlemen's paper and it presented the feelings of the people to those gentlemen.

An examination of The Times reveals that its editorialists waxed and waned in their enthusiasm for reform. When reform was not wanted, however, it was not because the workingman was unqualified; other reasons, including foreign affairs and domestic problems, caused those journalists to indicate the time was not right. When reform was deemed necessary, journalists advocated a moderate measure, and the innocence and intelligence of the workers were displayed as indications of their admissibility. Whether editorialists were for or against reform, the image portrayed in The Times remained constant. The worker deserved the governing class's trust and needed its guidance because of the worker's innocence. What is remarkable is that the same image can be found in The Times's antagonist, the Quarterly Review.

Founded in 1809 ostensibly to review books and published four times a year, articles in the Quarterly Review might discuss books or barely mentioned them, serving only as a springboard for the ideas of the reviewers. The authors, it should be noted, remained anonymous; only on rare occasions were their names given, and studies have been devoted to ascertaining the writer of this or that article. The tone
of most contributing authors was one of moral righteousness because the *Quarterly Review* considered itself to be the defender of the constitution.

Contributors to the *Quarterly Review* displayed a conservatism that went beyond political Conservative views. The British nation and the unwritten constitution which guided that nation had proven themselves by withstanding the vicissitudes of time. Such institutions should not be hastily changed, if at all. Any attempts to alter the existing state were met by a resistance which realistically emphasized the consequences of rash actions. Reform was disparaged and, in an attempt to justify this stand, contributors to the *Quarterly Review* tried to promote an image of the worker as morally corrupt. They failed in that attempt because within those articles which described the dissoluteness of the workers, the view surfaced that they essentially were naive and, therefore, easily corruptible. Also, a portion of the working class usually was held up as an example to the others. Furthermore, when threats to the constitution dissipated, the essayists in the *Quarterly Review* elicited an image of a respectable worker.

The evidence indicates, therefore, that while the defender of the people, *The Times*, often disagreed with the political opinions of the defender of the constitution, the *Quarterly Review*, both agreed in their basic view of the workingman—that he was educated, industrious, and deserved to be enfranchised. The workingman was naive, innocent, easily corruptible, and needed their guidance. Parliamentarians were well aware of the existence of clashing interests; what they needed to learn was that all Englishmen deserved their respect.
An examination of editorials in *The Times*, studying the various attitudes toward reform, indicates that the journalists did not consider the worker to be the problem. In 1857, for example, a writer for *The Times* stated, "Does the country want a fresh Reform Bill? As a question of fact, we think not." The reason given for this apathy was that other matters were more important, such as the country's having to recover from the Crimean War.

The prospect of a reform bill brought forward by the New Reform Bill Party in 1858, urging such radical practices as a secret ballot, was considered unnecessary and dangerous by writers of *The Times*; however, "that the suffrage should be large extended, and should embrace the educated class of artisans, we have always urged." By February, the writers commented,

So, wisely, temperately, and deliberately we may proceed still further in the direction of the Bill of 1832. There are now no bitter grievances to be removed, no heavy burdens to be alleviated, no excitement of popular feelings to be calmed. But the progress of time has made desirable an extension of the principles which were accepted a quarter of a century ago, and if the present year prove to be too busily employed for the passing of a suitable measure, at any rate any time spent in discussing its details will not be lost. Parliamentarians could proceed with working out the logistics of reform because the people did not want the radical innovations proposed by the New Reform Bill Party.

In *The Times*'s New Year's Day editorial of 1859, its writers referred to reform as the "never-ending, still-beginning, work of this country." They hoped that Lord Derby would be able to put together a moderate bill, for it must come out, and any decent measure will be better than an attempt to drive the virus inwards, and leave the Constitution
neither sickened nor cured. The defeat of any measure can only lead to a stronger one, and meanwhile much festering agitation.8

Mr. Bright did introduce a stronger bill, and an editorialist retorted, "The country is not ripe for the Charter."9 He apparently was right, as is evident in an article about Mr. Bright's appearance at a reform meeting in Birmingham.

During the discussion of these several propositions considerable confusion prevailed, but it was evident that, unlike the reform agitation 28 years ago, the people of Birmingham take comparatively little interest in the matter. . . . If attendance is any evidence of the enthusiastic support of the people, the meeting was a decided failure.10

The country was calm; it was a good time to reform, but numerous difficulties arose. Among those difficulties was a problem alluded to earlier and described by The Times in a comment on John Bright.

That the leader of this school in England should solemnly declare that the dweller in a farmhouse or an agricultural village, or the neat suburb which lies just outside some borough district, is politically inferior to the man who lives within the aggregate of dwellings called a town, is a fact to make the philosopher stare.11 Reform was delayed because of the difficulty parliamentarians encountered in trying to define respectability by property or educational qualifications.

Throughout January and February of 1860, there was a sense of weariness in The Times's discussions of reform. Bright's radical proposals were not wanted, but reform was deemed to be necessary nonetheless.12 A journalist wished aloud that parliamentarians would get it over with. Recovering his sense of responsibility, he added,

And yet Parliamentary Reform is not in itself either unimportant or uninteresting, involving as it does the hopes and aspirations of the working classes, the balance of power between the different interests into which the country is divided, and a certain change of position to every political notability in the land.13
Why, then, the writers wondered, was there only indifference?

The reason must be, that a conviction has gone abroad that the cry of Reform has been abused for mere party purposes, and that the first step towards attaining any stability for our Government must be the getting rid of the question altogether, by passing something from which we may begin a new era.14

Party machinations left the populace weary, but of that populace The Times had praise only.

Whatever may be the actual burdens of this country and the trials in store for us we have at least one great advantage—the nation is thoroughly united. . . . Class hatreds are extinct, or linger only in a few perverse and narrow minds. We are about within the present year to intrust the ark of the Constitution to the guardianship of new hands, with full confidence that they will prove to be defenders, and not betrayers.15

If reform was not accomplished in 1860, it was not because The Times had branded some of the people ineligible by reason of their unrespectability.

The Times, in 1861, saw no need for reform. As one writer commented on the day before Parliament was to meet, "There is a season for all things, and this is not the season for reforming our Constitution."16 When parliamentarians persisted in bringing in their favorite bills for reform, a journalist wrote, "There is a time for all things, and events have shown, with a force which we should have thought admitted of no contradiction, that the present is not the time for Reform."17 Why? First, the apathy of the public16 and second, the uncertain affairs in Europe19 precluded the desire for reform. As one writer noted in a comment on John Bright,

Nobody doubts his powers. He is the best popular orator of his day. Then, whose fault is it that now, this February, 1861, after a nine years' agitation, and after half-a-dozen changes of Ministry more or less associated with the question of Reform, Mr. Bright has nothing to report on the subject, except that the people of England are educated, prosperous, rich, busy, and
everything else, but are generally not only unrepresented but wholly indifferent to the franchise?20

According to editorials in The Times, the condition of the people had improved so much that they had no need for reform, and in regard to foreign affairs the sight of revolutions in Europe revived old fears that moderate reforms could degenerate into radical reforms and revolution.

Just now Reform is under a cloud, or at a discount, as they would say in the city. Everything is against it. We see the results of revolution and universal suffrage in France; we see them in the United States; last, but not least, we see Mr. Bright, and we say to ourselves—What if the 6½ voters should make him our Dictator, with absolute power over life and property?21

No blemish on the workingmen was indicated but that of inexperience; they were liable to be corrupted by unscrupulous leaders. Furthermore, the fears evoked were those which emanated from the results of revolutions, a consistent and pervasive fear of a people separated from yet connected to the European continent and America.

The year 1862 was described by journalists of The Times as a low point for matters of reform; they gave two reasons.

We should think that by this time we cannot be very far from the lowest ebb of that reaction which, originating with the failure of all measures of Parliamentary Reform, received a final impulse from the remarkable financial, political, and military exhibition made by the spoilt children of Democracy on the soil of her own chosen territory.32

The failure of parliamentarians to agree on a proposal for reform, coupled with the fear engendered by seeing the American democracy run amuck, led to a hiatus in the impetus for reform, and the respite continued in 1863 as well. "For once, the British people would rather be as they are."23

European affairs entered into the picture in 1864.
What between the American Scylla on one side and the European Charybdis on the other, our statesmen have enough to do with looking to the helm of affairs, and we should soon find ourselves dashed against the one or sucked into the vortex of the other if they were to divide their thoughts between the Permissive Beer Bill and the claims of 5£ householders.\(^2\)

Foreign affairs kept the parliamentarians occupied in these years, and it must be remembered that these were the years that saw the unification of Italy and Bismarck's quest for a unified Germany. Finally, Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister and, while he followed no particular political program, his policies at home were generally conservative while his liberal practices in foreign affairs kept the country distracted.

Editorialists in 1865 were of the opinion that reform, which had languished since 1860, should be allowed to rest.\(^2\) In a comment on Lord Grey's republication of his book, *Essay on Parliamentary Reform*, in which sweeping reforms were advocated, a writer stated,

> Let it be proved that the admission of the working classes to the suffrage and the equal or nearly equal distribution of electoral power will be a substantial improvement to our Government, and the thing will, no doubt, be done. But let us not do what we believe to be wrong merely because it is asked for, and because we imagine that we are able by a number of subtle devices altogether to neutralize and destroy the effect of our own concessions.\(^2\)

In a similar reaction, a writer commented on Lord John Russell's republication of his book about the constitution and wondered how the franchise could be extended without letting it extend too far.\(^2\) Parliamentarians were determined to reform moderately. The difficulty they encountered was to agree on an arbitrary rent payment which would include the respectable workers but exclude those not worthy of their trust. Such problems, exacerbated by political infighting, made journalists doubtful that a solution could be found.
As the parliamentary session of 1866 was about to open, writers for *The Times* reacted to rumors of an upcoming reform proposal. Commenting on a speech by John Bright, an editorialist noted that Bright seemed more willing to compromise than before and had stated that new representation was needed to include a class wholly excluded. The writer cautioned that too many workers, however, would create an imbalance in the system of representation. The next day, an editorial in *The Times* spoke of the need for a "moderate but comprehensive measure.

Again, a fear of lowering the franchise too far was evident in a comment on the Manchester reformers when a writer insinuated that they wanted to enfranchise those with whom they would not do business privately. At the same time, however, a journalist wrote of his belief that the franchise should be extended, for reasons which had not been given before.

The conviction that a class ought to have the franchise, or is 'morally entitled, to come within the pale of the Constitution,' especially after it has so often been promised admission, is not in its nature so cogent as the feeling that it is suffering a practical grievance by exclusion, or the persuasion that, if admitted, it would find an accumulation of abuses to clear away.

Not only was this writer in favor of a moderate measure, but he proposed a new reason for enfranchising the working--that the inclusion of the worker might be beneficial to legislators.

On 1 January 1867, an editorial read, "If there is to be Reform, the quicker it is done the better." Tired of party machinations, a writer rebuked the Whigs and Tories as Parliament was about to meet in February.
Whig and Tory have now for a whole generation equally denied the claims of that labouring class which is the staple of British industry and the rough foundations of this State, and the claims of this enormous metropolis, which is the seat and the summit of this empire. It is no blame to either side not to suggest grievances and create difficulties, and to dispense with auxiliaries at once unnecessary and indifferent. But what becomes of that pure faith of Reform which, according to Lord Russell, distinguishes the orthodox Whig from the Conservative heretic, which dallies with no occasion and bows to no circumstance? The truth is the Whigs have wanted their Reform—that is, one to answer their purpose; and the Conservatives have wanted their Reform—that is, one to answer their purpose. Both are Reformers in a sense of their own.\footnote{33}

That politics played an important role in the passage of the Second Reform Bill never has been denied. What principles, however, prompted journalists to hope for a quick solution?

There are certain cardinal principles which must find expression in a set of Reform Resolutions by whomsoever they may be proposed. . . . No one can deny that there are large numbers excluded from the exercise of the franchise who are as qualified by intelligence and education to possess the privilege of voting as the mass of ordinary electors.\footnote{34}

As has always been true, only the problem of how to achieve this end without allowing a degeneration into radical reforms remained.

It is evident that The Times’s enthusiasm for reform fluctuated, just as the people's enthusiasm fluctuated. At the same time, however, some facts remained constant. When The Times did not want reform, it was not because its writers considered the workingman ineligible to take part in the government. When The Times was in favor of reform, specific qualities of the workingman were used in their argument. Two images of that workingman emerge in comments by writers of The Times in the decade preceding reform.

The first image is that of the oppressed workers, innocent in their condition and corruptible because of that condition. In 1859,
an essayist wrote about the inhabitants of the borough of Banbury:

The beef and strong beer have entered into their souls, and they now record their votes for the man who pays the best... The Banbury artisans know the man who feeds themselves, their wives, and their children.35

Similarly, another writer commented in 1861,

To say the honest truth, the chief misgiving we have about these ten-pounders is that a good many of them will be sorely put about to decide between the influences brought to bear on them--very glad to vote for this gentleman if it would not offend that gentleman.36

The journalist's concern was that the workingmen suffered corruption for the sake of food, and at the hands of those above them.

In a comment on a plea for benevolence on some societies, a contributor said,

What you have lost has merely found its way to honest working men, their wives and children; not to roguish speculators, feasting and flaring at your expense, and drinking champagne, while you, perhaps, are watering your tea... Anybody with a few hundreds or thousands may now find an investment that will yield 4 per cent and be the greatest possible benefit to our hardworking labourers and artisans.37

It was up to the governing class to make sure that the workingmen's condition was such that they could not be corrupted by those with suspect motives.

The oppression under which the workingman lived was made clear in a comment on the Lancashire operatives in 1864.

In the Cotton District they live upon beds of coal, they walk under a continual canopy of smoke, they breath sulphur, the pores of their skin are choked with soot, acrid fumes infest the nose, and the eye is wearied with countless chimney-stalks vomiting the thickest smoke, or some more suspicious product. But in that warmth are centred all the ideas of busy work, pleasant company, and good cheer that make the life of the working man.38

Even in the midst of sordid conditions the workingman persevered, and those conditions were compared to slavery.
It certainly is rather curious, amounting to a national paradox, that just at a time when slavery is receiving its last condemnation by the civilized world, when the commerce of mankind is more and more on the exact principles of political economy, and when we are all seriously considering how far we may extend household suffrage, and include the working classes in the pale of our Constitution, we should find ourselves estimating the condition of our agricultural labourers precisely as we should that of an African slave in the Southern States.39

The response to the plight of the oppressed innocent was that the persons whose threatened fate appeals to our pity are the as yet unenfranchised—lambs, innocents, babes, hitherto unknowing of golden arguments and without that sense of political manhood which always follows a contested election.40

The message was clear. The obligation of those who had reached adulthood, in a political sense, was to guide those who yet were children.

The second image portrayed the workingman as the epitome of respectability, in character and in actions. In regard to actions, a journalist remarked in 1858 on the peaceful agitation for reform, so unlike earlier agitation. "With an instinctive feeling the crowd knows that no man who has a character or his own self-respect to lose will join in anything like a violation of the law."41 And how does the crowd know that?

In these few years Government has been consistently liberal, and knowledge has largely increased. The consequences are seen in the calmness and good sense with which the nation waits for a Reform which but a short time since was so violently demanded.42

In a comment on criminals in 1862, a contributor stated,

The dangerous classes seem to be getting the better of society. We are not speaking of political disaffection or popular discontent. From seditions, conspiracies, rebellions, and all those angry passions which involve States in revolutions, we are happily free. We have no smouldering animosities to fear or overt insurrections to dread. Though a large portion of the population is plunged in distress, that distress is patiently endured and munificently relieved."43
A demonstration planned by the Reform League in 1867 was cause for apprehension, an apprehension that was needless.

The inhabitants of London, and especially the working classes are to be congratulated on the issue of yesterday's proceedings. Nothing can better show the good sense which forms the basis of the English character than that the London artisans and workpeople generally should have abstained from joining in this arrogant and menacing display. . . . By refusing to yield to the incessant instigations of their leaders they establish a better claim to the franchise than if they were to 'treat the Clubs' to an overpowering 'Demonstration' every Monday for a twelvemonth. . .

The workers had not listened to those who had tried to corrupt them, indicating that they could imitate the manners and ability of the governing class.

Not only did workingmen show respectability through inaction, but also through some positive actions.

Since 1832 the population has increased, education has increased much, not only absolutely but in proportion to the number of the qualified age; the Savings-Banks' deposits have increased also relatively; and it follows that not only more people, but also a large proportion of the people, are fit for the franchise now than at the passing of the last Reform Bill.

Both of these actions--getting an education and saving money--were concrete proof to parliamentarians of the workers' admissibility to the system. Not all of the workers' actions were considered respectable, however,

In 1861, a journalist remarked that strikes, through workingmen's "infatuated obstinacy or sottish extravagance," caused as much misery as the destitute suffered through the hardships of winter. The theme was reiterated in 1862 in a comment on pauperism.

At present the actual distress is probably not greater in any quarter than is often wilfully incurred by a 'strike.' What with the suicidal follies of workmen themselves and the inevitable fluctuations of trade, it is found that these periods of suffering are sure to recur.
How can these actions be reconciled with earlier accounts of the workingman's respectable conduct? They are reconciled because a distinction was made between the class and its leaders. For example, when Mr. Lowe made a speech in Parliament, some phrases were extracted by leaders of the workingmen and used by them to arouse the workers' anger against parliamentary inaction. The ploy did not work.\(^{48}\) Also, in referring to the London Trades' Union Council, one journalist noted that the workingman gave the freedom of negotiation to irresponsible leaders who tried to coerce through threats of strikes.\(^ {49}\) This aberration from the second image of respectability agrees with the first, that is, of an innocent who is easily corruptible. The first image of respectability, however, is underscored by comments on the character of the workingman.

In 1859, an editorialist stated,

> There is no wish, we are satisfied, in any class of this country to grasp at power which does not justly belong to them. They will naturally expect what they believe their own, and may, not unnaturally, differ as to the exact amount of their share; but we believe Mr. Bright to be mistaken in the character of those whom he assumes to lead if he thinks they will follow him in an attempt to erect an oligarchy under the mask of a democracy. . . . The conscience of the people revolts at such a scheme. Their intelligence tells them that so disgraceful a victory could not be permanent, and that nothing would be gained by the attempt to raise an oligarchy of representation on the ruins of an hereditary aristocracy.\(^{50}\)

The educated workers would not be led astray by promises of easy gain; they knew better than to listen to false promises.

That same year, a comment on reform noted that

> if you look at a mass of buildings in progress, you see a hundred workmen labouring with much skill and industry, entering heart and soul into the work, with a strong sense of duty to their employers, and much power of social organization among themselves.\(^ {51}\)
Laborers worked well together and produced great things because of their cooperation and willingness to work. Furthermore, the forbearance of the Lancashire people during the American Civil War elicited the comment that they

are now too well instructed to be carried away by the theories which only a few years since filled the minds of the working class here, and were acted upon to their full absurdity by the revolutionists of a neighbouring country.\(^{52}\)

The notion that education made a worker less susceptible to unscrupulous leaders thus was reiterated. Education had made the workingman respectable, yet he also had benefited from another education.

In 1864, a contributor wrote about the habits and mind of the workingman:

The cottage home, the example of toil and patience all around him, the sense of a tremendous necessity, and the feeling of that mighty endurance of toil and trouble written upon everything he sees and hears, have taught him more than we could ever teach him, for they have made him a better man than the more fortunate boy who is surrounded with all the illusions of affluence, position, power, and luxury.\(^{53}\)

The natural education of workingmen also was seen as leading to better morals.

The poor man's child lives under the face of nature, daily acquires new store of sights and sounds, quickens the senses, readily links the name and the thing, and soon learns an incredible number of individual persons and things, besides that physical development which, in so many respects, assists the spiritual. . . . All we say is that in childhood the classes have much to learn one from another, and that the class which has drifted from nature has the most to learn.\(^{54}\)

Perhaps the highest compliment paid to the workingmen was that which likened them to the governing class. In a comment on a Mechanics' Institute, a writer stated,
We may judge from this account of a single Institute in a large town that education among the more aspiring of the artisan class does not take a direction materially different from that which it takes among the higher and middle classes. We are all so much one, and have such identical ideas and aims, that we all want to learn the same things.55

Through actions and specific qualities of character, the workingman's image was that of respectability. The workingmen did not listen to the leaders who proposed demonstrations; they did a fair day's work for fair wages, and character was formed through formal education and the informal teachings of nature. Was the second image given by writers in *The Times* so different from the first? The oppressed innocent needed their guidance and the respectable workingman deserved their trust. Such were the images evoked by *The Times*.

In contrast, articles in the *Quarterly Review* illustrated conservative ideas and, as the movement for reform gained momentum and fear of democracy increased, a predominant image—that of a respectable person liable to be corrupted because of a lack of political knowledge—changed in order to serve its political stand against any changes, the consequences of which might endanger the constitution and the nation. For that reason, it is necessary to follow the *Quarterly Review* chronologically through the decade preceding the Second Reform Bill of 1867.

In 1857, when the ardor for reform was cool, two articles delineated the *Quarterly Review*’s view of the workingman and its view of reform. In regard to the workingman, a contributor wrote,

Many and many is the man among working village tradesmen, gamekeepers, gardeners, among the mechanics, artisans, and operatives of our towns, who is as much entitled to claim credit both for intellectual and moral excellence of every kind
in the pursuit of his calling, as any shopkeeper, as any manufacturer, merchant, squire, or nobleman in the land.\textsuperscript{56}

The image of respectability had been put forward, yet the writer cautioned that the "the mistake we make is when we look to these qualities in the abstract, and apart from the consideration of the scale on which they have been habitually exercised."\textsuperscript{57}

To consider workingmen respectable was one thing, but to consider them eligible for the franchise was quite another. A contributor enthusiastically reflected on the old methods of electioneering:

\begin{quote}
Our safety [from revolution] was in the natural character, the antiquity of the institutions, and the kindly feeling and respect of class for class, which the old electioneering, with its rude and barbarous liberality, had a decided tendency to keep up.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

The workingman might be intellectually and morally excellent, but the old ways of doing things which had proven themselves through endurance should not be changed hastily.

Enfranchisement again was disparaged in 1859.

Those who have mixed with working men know how wild are many of their notions, from their never having mastered the most elementary propositions upon which the well-being of society depends. There will always be some who are gifted with an ability beyond their fellows, and whose mental energy overcomes the obstacles opposed by their position; but in the aggregate they are not, and by the ordinances of nature cannot be, qualified to give the law to the kingdom.\textsuperscript{57}

While lowering the franchise was not a good idea, the writer produced an image of workingmen whose political inexperience produced "wild" ideas while maintaining that a portion were respectable. The accusation that the workingmen were unqualified by the laws of nature might be explained by the following political warnings which indicated that
imminent parliamentary action on reform was dangerous. For example, one essayist cautioned,

Let the middle classes of this great country, the manufacturers, the respectable tradespeople, the farmers—all, in short, who employ labour and pay wages—pause before they put themselves and their property under the dominion of their men. Unless they offer a steady and timely resistance the fatal boundary will be passed, when they will no longer be able to control the movement and save the state.\(^6^0\)

The nation was in jeopardy, and the prospect of parliamentary action on the reform question prompted this note at the end of that year's April issue:

It is now that the country must decide between democratic change and Conservative moderation. A more momentous, a more vital subject could not be submitted to the electors of this kingdom, and we trust that no one will forget that upon the result of the contest depends the future Constitution of England.\(^6^1\)

It is evident that the fear of democracy and a need to protect the constitution temporarily had caused the *Quarterly Review*’s writers to deem the worker unfit.

That clarion call was strangely muted after the parliamentary session was over and the danger had passed; a writer in October stated that it might be advisable to consider "whether there are not some classes of persons and some kinds of property to which the franchise may properly be extended."\(^6^2\) If there had to be reform, it should be done with great caution. Parliament was not in session, diminishing the threat to the constitution, and the view of the worker changed accordingly.

An article on strikes, an action which even *The Times* did not condone, was conciliatory in its image of the workingman, stating that "no labourer is better worthy of his hire than the English one. It is
not merely that he works harder than the labourer of any other country, but he generally produces a better quality of workmanship."\(^6^3\) Also, "such being the diligence, the dexterity, and the ingenuity of English workmen, it is meet that they should be liberally remunerated."\(^6^4\) An accommodation with employers was the writer's solution, and the image of respectability was restored. It is clear that writers of the \textit{Quarterly Review} wanted no radical change in the constitution. At the same time, their image of workingmen indicated that they were good men, although somewhat naive.

Articles on reform in 1860 cautioned against democracy,\(^6^5\) but considered that reform which preserved a mixed government might be acceptable.\(^6^6\) The image of the workingman remained respectable. For example, an article on "Cotton-Spinning Machines and Their Inventors" stated that "the most valuable property of the land of Lancashire consists in the Men who live upon it, and give it its worth."\(^6^7\) The contributor quoted "an old writer" who said that the cotton workers were shrewd and sagacious. Those who found them "rough and uncouth" did not know them well, and their products were better than anything produced in Europe or in the world. The contributor concluded,

\begin{quote}
Such are the men who have converted the barren wilds and bleak moors of South Lancashire, within little more than a century, into one of the richest districts of England; and who, by their skill, invention, and persevering industry, having established the branch of manufacture we have thus summarily described.\(^6^8\)
\end{quote}

At the same time, the workers' condition was such that they needed guidance. An essayist on "Workmen's Earnings and Savings" remarked,

\begin{quote}
No one can reproach the English workman with want of industry. He works harder and more skilfully than the workers of any other country; and he might be more comfortable and independent in his
circumstances were he as prudent as he is laborious. But imprudence is unhappily the defect of the class.⁶⁹

Although the workers were industrious, they were not accustomed to saving money. This was a significant point because parliamentarians, in their attempt to find concrete proof of admissibility to the franchise, often proposed a qualification of having a savings account. The essayist concluded that the workers' improvidence is to be cured, not so much by conferring greater rights, as by implanting better habits—a course which the efforts to inspire working men with a contempt for their own condition, and a hatred of the classes above them is in no respect calculated to promote.⁷⁰

It is evident that this essayist considered the leaders of workingmen to be provoking them to hate their station in life and the governing class as well. The worker should be raised up through "better habits," not lowered by unscrupulous leaders. The images of respectability and corruptible innocence remained because the parliamentarians had come to their senses. "The danger of a democratic degradation of our constitution seemed at one time to be one on which we must inevitably drift,"⁷¹ but Mr. Bright had saved the day, according to the author of "The Conservative Reaction," by making the governing class aware that a lowering of the franchise would end in full democracy.

In 1861, contributors to the Quarterly Review experienced an intensified fear of democracy. Gladstone's apparent conversion to reform and the American Civil War prompted this warning:

It is at our own peril if we persist in straying down the slippery slopes over which we have already seen the guide we were following disappear. We know now all that is implied in the apparently innocent proposal 'to admit the people within the pale of the constitution.'⁷²
The drama in America unfolded before the nation's eyes: "Its boastful opening, its fair-seeming progress, and its tragic close." The franchise had been extended in the United States until the mob ruled every branch of the government. Selfish interests predominated over the common good until civil war resulted. The author of the warning concluded,

It is a spectacle we should study deeply, for so striking a warning is rarely granted to a nation. If, in spite of it, we suffer the intrigues of politicians to lure us into democracy, we shall deserve our downfall, for we shall have perished by that wilful infatuation which no warning can dispel.

Fear intensified meant that the practical consequences of lowering the franchise were further enfranchisement, democracy, and ruin. The constitution and the nation were in grave danger, as contemporary events had proven.

The image of the workingman abruptly changed in response to these fears as was evident in an article entitled "Spiritual Destitution in the Metropolis." The writer lamented the low moral state into which the masses had fallen.

There are whole streets within easy walk of Charing Cross... where the people live literally without God in the world; where there seems to be no knowledge of the difference between moral right and moral wrong; no belief whatever in a future state, or of man's responsibility to any other authority than that of the law, if it can catch him.

Furthermore, promiscuity and "debauchery" were as rampant as religious and moral sensibility were absent: "The very shopkeepers make a profession of atheism, and encourage their poor customers to do the same." Finally, workers were being taught socialism and other "dangerous and enticing themes" by teachers "who know exactly how to adapt their language to the feelings and capacities of those to whom they
are sent; and they are indefatigable in their endeavours to make converts." The writer ended his harangue by crying, "Woe to the nation which in time of trouble has not been taught to look higher than to the decrees of earthly sovereigns or the enactments of earthly legislatures."78

The writer's tone of moral righteousness is unmistakable; it also is evident that he considered the low morals of the masses to pose a danger to the nation. Note, however, that even this view included the thought that there were leaders manipulating the workingmen and abetting them in their moral destitution—the shopkeepers who encouraged their customers to forsake God and the teachers who promoted socialism among the workers. Furthermore, this abrupt change in the workers' image indicates that the fear of democracy, brought about by current events, had caused writers of the Quarterly Review to reverse their image while remnants of the earlier image of the corruptible innocent seeped through.

A commentary on "Four Years of a Reforming Administration" produced a comment on "the period in which the Reform delusion has been dissipated."79 Before,

nobody disputed that a constant degradation of the suffrage was to be the inexorable law of our growth; and that as time went on, it would be, not our choice, but our necessity, to consign our national interests more and more to the guidance of the most ignorant amongst us, and to submit at each change to be taxed more and more according to the discretion and at the pleasure of the classes who habitually stand upon the brink of want.80

With the threat of radical parliamentary action over, the earlier images once again appeared. On the one hand, an article on institutes for workingmen included the statement that
in most cases of failure or ill success, we believe the root of the evil will be found to be the same which we have noticed in respect to the movement thirty years ago, namely, that the average mental calibre of working men has been overrated.\footnote{31}

The worker seemed to be incapable of comprehending higher matters according to the author. On the other hand, an article on cooperative societies described the members as those who belonged to the thoughtful, earnest portion of the working classes who, however they may for the time be led astray by false lights, are sure in the end to find the true road. . . . They had that, without which we believe no great social improvement was ever effected, a strong moral feeling—a deep conviction of the rightfulness and weightiness of their cause.\footnote{32}

Confident that nothing radical was going to happen in the political sphere, writers of the Quarterly Review relaxed their vigilance and allowed the predominant image of the workingman to come through. Respectability was restored to the workers' image.

A contributor to the Quarterly Review summarized the political situation in 1864.

A democratic legislature, sovereign, uncontrolled, in the midst of an aristocratic society, is an experiment of which we have had only one example, and that of a somewhat inauspicious kind. The Constituent Assembly of 1789 is not likely to find imitators of its wild pranks in an English atmosphere; but it is literally the only precedent strictly in point, for a House of Commons transmuted as our advanced Reformers desire.\footnote{83}

It is evident that the writers of the Quarterly Review were confident such an event would not happen. "If the effect of . . . [Gladstone's] speech has been insignificant, that happy result has been due to the wise apathy of the working-men, and not to the moderation or carefulness of Mr. Gladstone's language."\footnote{84} Their confidence was reflected in the image of the workingman.

The benefit societies of the working classes, defective though they may be in many respects, are much safer in their own hands.
They have improved and are improving.

The rudest society established by working men for mutual help in sickness, independent of help from private charity or poor rates, is grounded on a right spirit, and is deserving of encouragement rather than of the ridicule and unfair criticism which their humble efforts have too often received.

They have practically taught self-reliance, and cultivated amongst the humblest classes habits of provident economy.

A similar attitude prevailed in 1865. There was the confident attitude that reform was not imminent because "it is scarcely probable that any earnest or united demand will be made by the working-classes for such a submission [to democracy]." Moreover, "that Mr. Gladstone has not forced his chief to bring in a Reform Bill is the best proof that can be had of the strength of the Conservative feeling that animates the country." There also was an image of respectability surrounding the workingman.

It is only under the influence of transient fits of passion that the folly of demagogues is adopted by large masses of men—least of all when those masses are composed of elements so practical as the English workman. He is not likely to turn away from pressing duties and solid gains, to chase the phantom of 'enfranchisement.'

As long as workingmen did not agitate for reform, writers of the Quarterly Review were content with their image.

The Liberal Reform Bill of 1866 prompted a quick change of sentiment.

Have they [workingmen] not abandoned all these things [personal interest, affection, esteem] at the bidding of their leaders for the sake of extorting a trifling increase of pay from some small numbers of employers? and will they not do that, and more also, to win the far higher prizes that may be wrung from the nation at large?

To the governing class, a warning was issued that reform "will leave the employer helpless in the presence of those whom he employs—will lie in an unflagging and unfastidious courtiership of the new masters.
they have installed." The imminence of a Liberal reform bill prompted writers for the *Quarterly Review* to invoke the dangers involved in admitting the worker to the franchise. Even so, the view that the workers might do the "bidding" of their leaders indicated their gullibility in political matters.

When a Conservative ministry came into office in the middle of 1866, contributors became less protective of the constitution because Conservatives, they believed, surely would guard it as zealously as they had. As a result, they conceded that some of the workingmen might possess the necessary traits for enfranchisement.

When the working-man and his advocates have become so practical and sincere in their demand for Reform that they will accept participation without predominance, the "settlement of the question" will have been attained; but not till then.71

Previous descriptions of workingmen would hardly make one believe they could be so practical. As a spokesman for Conservative views, however, the *Quarterly Review* could not undermine the political party which also was associated with conservatism.

A conservative Cabinet is at least as capable as any to be formed out of rival parties to grapple with the difficulties that beset the question; provided only, but provided always, they be met by the House of Commons, and the more temperate and intelligent of the working class and their leaders out of doors, in a spirit congenial to the English reputation for good sense and love of fair play.92

If reform was necessary, it was best that the Conservative party do the reforming because the constitution would be safe in its hands. The workingman's image benefited from this sense of security.

The image of respectability was shunted aside, however, when the Conservatives passed a bill enfranchising even more workers than the Liberal bill of the previous year.
Contrary to the teaching of all history, more especially contrary to the teaching of the history of England, we have flung aside all moderation, all foresight, all prudence. Last year the attempt was to enfranchise the class whose leading principles and ideas are illustrated by the transaction of Trades Unions. This year we have at least in some degree avoided this risk by swamping the skilled artisan in an element of which we do not even know that it has in it any political life at all. We seek to escape the evils of unbridled democracy by the evils of unbounded corruption. Our last hope is, that our future rulers may choose to sell us the power we are giving them, instead of exercising it for their ruin and our own.

A sense of betrayal is evident. According to the writer, the Conservative party had turned its back on the principles of conservatism: "moderation," "foresight," and "prudence." Even in this attack on the lowered franchise, it is indicated that the workers had no political knowledge and might, therefore, be bribed into sharing their power.

Contributors to the Quarterly Review were guided by a conservative faith in the constitution and the nation. Any lowering of the franchise was deplored because of the danger it would pose to those institutions which had proven themselves by enduring. In response to such fears, the image of the workingman often was that of one who was easy prey for unscrupulous leaders. When fear of political action dissipated, the workingman's image was restored to what seems to be the predominant view, that of one who was respectable and innocent. That image appears predominant in that, even in some of the worst attacks on the workingman, it emerges in references to a portion of the class that remained respectable and in references to the gullibility of the worker.

The Times and the Quarterly Review represented two opposing interests. As one attempted to defend the people, the other attempted
to defend the constitution and the nation against any threats to those institutions, including a dictatorship of numbers. Such factions are present in any society. It is noteworthy, in view of their differences, to find that their views of the worker were so similar.
CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 307.

3 Ibid., p. 303.

4 The Times (London), 21 February 1857, col. 4, p. 9.

5 Ibid., 7 January 1858, cols. 3-4, p. 6.

6 Ibid., 4 January 1858, col. 5, p. 8.

7 Ibid., 1 January 1859, col. 3, p. 6.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 21 January 1859, col. 6, p. 6.

10 Ibid., 2 February 1859, col. 5, p. 9.

11 Ibid., 22 January 1859, cols. 2-3, p. 8.

12 Ibid., 23 January 1860, cols. 5-6, p. 6.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid., 4 February 1861, col. 3, p. 8.

17 Ibid. 19 February 1861, col. 3, p. 6.

18 Ibid., 31 January 1861, cols. 2-3, p. 6 and 6 February 1861, cols. 3-4, p. 9.

19 Ibid., 17 January 1861, cols. 3-4, p. 8 and 4 February 1861, cols. 2-3, p. 8.

20 Ibid., 7 February 1861, col. 5, p. 8.

21 Ibid., 13 February 1861, cols. 4-5, p. 8.

23Ibid., 1 January 1863, col. 3, p. 8.
24Ibid., 14 January 1864, col. 4, p. 8.
25Ibid., 7 February 1865, cols. 3-4, p. 8.
26Ibid., 5 January 1865, col. 3, p. 6.
27Ibid., 20 February 1865, cols. 4-5, p. 8.
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31Ibid., 5 February 1866, col. 3, p. 8.
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33Ibid., 7 February 1867, col. 5, p. 6.
34Ibid., 11 February 1867, col. 5, p. 6.
36Ibid., 21 February 1861, col. 5, p. 8.
37Ibid., 16 January 1861, col. 4, p. 8.
38Ibid., 6 January 1864, col. 4, p. 6.
39Ibid., 31 January 1866, col. 5, p. 8.
40Ibid., 26 January 1866, col. 3, p. 8.
41Ibid., 15 January 1858, col. 3, p. 6.
42Ibid.
43Ibid., 2 January 1862, col. 5, p. 6.
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46Ibid., 11 February 1861, cols. 2-3, p. 8.
48Ibid., 9 January 1867, col. 6, p. 6 and col. 1, p. 7.
49Ibid., 11 January 1867, col. 6, p. 8 and col. 1, p. 9.
51Ibid., 5 February 1859, col. 3, p. 8.
52Ibid., 8 January 1863, col. 3, p. 8.
53Ibid., 2 January 1864, col. 5, p. 8.
54Ibid., 10 January 1865, col. 1, p. 9.
57Ibid.
60Ibid., p. 274.
61Quarterly Review 105(April, 1859):564.
62"Parliamentary Reform, or the Three Bills, and Mr. Bright's Schedule," Quarterly Review 106 (October, 1859):561.
64Ibid., p. 487.
68Ibid., p. 85.
70Ibid., p. 84.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 463.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
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84 Ibid., p. 262.
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92 "England and Her Institutions," Quarterly Review 120 (October, 1866): 549.
Chapter 3

POLITICAL FACTIONS

Three different periodicals are included in this chapter: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, published monthly, and The Edinburgh Review and the Westminster Review, both published four times a year. Similar in their purpose, that of reviewing books and propagating literary works, they are different because each of them reflected a different political viewpoint, just as Parliament included the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the Radicals. Parliamentarians were well aware of the differences between the parties. For 15 years, those differences had kept them from agreeing upon a program for reform. Personal antagonisms, the coalescence of party members behind a strong leader regardless of the political stance, and the defeat of measures on the basis of opposition to a rival party kept parliamentary debates lively and forestalled any radical motions.

In view of such rivalries, what is remarkable is that all three magazines were in agreement on their view of the workingman. Politics may have created subtle differences between the views of contributors, but political differences dissolved when it came to their view of workers. They were educated and deserved their trust; they were innocent and needed their guidance. The evidence is conclusive that the image of the respectable worker was above politics—the message conveyed in these periodicals. They may have been tied to
specific political views, but they were, above all, literature and, as such, the conscience of Victorian readers.

As previously noted, conservatism was expressed in the Quarterly Review. The contributors to that periodical held an abiding faith in the constitution and the nation as they were, and because of that faith they were adamant in their opposition to reform because they wanted to know the practical consequences of any change. Conservatism also is present in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, but it is evident that it is a conservatism of a different kind.

Writers for Blackwood's expressed a belief in the constitution and the mixed system of representation, but they were more akin to the political Conservative party. As Conservatives, they believed in the goodness of workers but to allow a preponderance of them into the system would be to create an imbalance in the system, a tyranny of the majority. Such a dictatorship would emerge because so many of the workers were ignorant of political matters; because of their innocence, they could be persuaded to pursue their selfish interests to the detriment of the nation. In response to Liberal actions for reform, contributors became more strident in their assertion that Conservatives, too, wanted to include the worker, and in response to the Conservative reform program, the view of the respectable worker grew to include all workers. Unlike the Quarterly Review, contributors to Blackwood's were pleased to see the Conservatives do what the Liberals could not.

The political views of the Liberal party were nebulous. It could be said that most nineteenth-century Liberals believed in tree trade, an extended franchise, and the extension of sovereignty over noncontiguous
areas as Little Englanders. Above all, the sanctity of the individual ruled Liberal actions while the enemy of the individual changed as the century progressed. Liberals tried to improve the opportunity of the individual to succeed against artificial restrictions. In politics, the Liberals advocated moderate reforms, but always wanted reform because the freedom of the individual necessitated the inclusion of the worker into the system of representation.

The philosophical radicals, represented by the Westminster Review, were similar to the Liberals in that they also believed in the importance of the individual. Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill have been regarded as the leaders of this constantly changing, disparate, and difficult-to-define group. Utilitarianism and Benthamism have been used to describe their beliefs, incorporating the notion that their goal was to find the greatest good for the greatest number. Predominantly middle class, the philosophical radicals were consistent in their view of workers and their admissibility to the system of representation. Politically, they perhaps were less fearful than most British statesmen of radical parliamentary actions.

It is evident that the writers for Blackwood's, like the Quarterly Review, were basically conservative. In 1857, they exuded a sense of well-being; the system of representation was fine just as it was.

Happily secluded by the sea from foreign intervention, and aided by the practical spirit of compromise natural to the Anglo-Saxon race, they [the people of England] have at length reached the broad level of individual freedom and popular government. The pyramid, once poised unstably on its apex, now rests on its base.
Parliamentarians represented virtually all the people and, because of that state, another contributor concluded, "I think that organic changes, when the state of the commonwealth is healthy, cannot be justified."²

Parliamentary action on reform was not necessary, and contributors to *Blackwood's* said, "We think that Lord Palmerston has exercised a sound discretion in postponing, until next session of Parliament, all discussion upon the subject of representative reform."³

No image of the workingmen was given except for an insinuation that they were of the people and, therefore, content.

*Blackwood's* conservative view also was demonstrated in an article about John Bright in 1858.

Mob-rule doubtless has its sweets for the mobocracy, but it is neither a noble, wise, or pleasant thing for the other and better classes of the community. The British nation has no desire that the lowest of its many levels shall dictate law and manners to all the others.⁴

It is clear that the writer, like most Conservatives, considered democracy to be a tyranny of the majority--but what of the workingman?

In 1859, a divided image portrayed the workingman as respectable and politically ignorant. One writer conjured up an interesting picture--that some of the workers knew all of their class were not fit for the franchise.

If we are right in our interpretation [that the working man did not listen to agitators], it reflects the highest credit upon the good sense, perspicacity, and temperance of the working-classes. We are quite satisfied that, as a body, they do not wish to have political power in a measure corresponding to their numbers. They know each other better than we know them. The more intelligent of them--no inconsiderable section--are perfectly well aware, and make no secret of it, that any measure which would give a preponderance of power to the working-classes, must needs be fatal to the country.
They know how much ignorance, how much impulse, how much passion, and how much prejudice prevail.5

If the lower portion of the working class was enfranchised, democracy might result. This prompted one writer to warn, "If manhood suffrage were adopted, or if in any other way the working-classes should obtain a preponderance of political power, they would in like manner return men to represent their immediate interests only."6

While Conservatives believed the worker should be enfranchised, they retained their faith in the form of representation which had served the nation so long and so well. That form included a mixed representation. If all the workers were enfranchised, they would obtain a predominant majority because of their numbers. Conservatives believed that predominance would be disastrous because a large portion of the working class was politically ignorant.

As was consonant with Conservative beliefs, the image of respectability continued for the higher portion of the working class.

Among the artisans, especially those engaged in the higher trades, we are satisfied that there is a great deal of intelligence, much shrewdness, ingenuity, and natural power. Living in a free country, and enjoying the advantages of free discussion, they are active, restless, and inquiring; and no man who has ever sought their acquaintance in a proper spirit, will conceal the gratification which he has received from intercourse with the higher artisans.7

The fear, however, that parliamentarians would allow a disproportionately number of workers into the system brought this tirade against statesmen:

When the tide of democracy, then, is setting in upon us so strongly, can it be the act of sane men to level the way for the advancing flood? . . . Far-sightedness is not a quality for which British statesmen have been much distinguished; but surely even an ass might see the danger in their path which our prophets of Reform so blindly overlook.8
While the workingman's image generally was good, political fears brought out political conservatism. "For ourselves, we think that the reduction of the franchise has already gone as far as will ever do the country any good." It was better to leave the system as it was if the alternative was to open the gates and flood the system with workers.

The impressive image of the artisan, that worker which Conservatives believed could be included without harming the system, persisted in 1860. One essayist wrote that "neither is it of minor importance that the artisan should possess somewhat of the cunning skill of the education artist, that so his work may be less of blind mechanism, and more of enlightening mind." Liberal in its assessment of the artisan, Blackwood's remained conservative in regard to enfranchising all workers.

I prize and love the Working-man; I venerate his toil,
Whether he plies an urban task or cultivates the soil.
But constant labour of the hands encroaches on the head,
Nor are they always wise and free who strive for daily bread.
I'd praise their virtues, treat their faults with soft and gentle hand,
But I would not make the WORKING-MEN the Rulers of the land.

Conservatives believed in the basic goodness of the worker. What worried party members was the inclusion of too many workers. There was, however, no need to worry about parliamentary action on reform for a number of years to come.

In 1861, a contributor remarked that "there seems to be no great probability that we shall be troubled in the coming session
with the standing difficulty of Reform." One of the reasons was the American Civil War.

We have written in vain if we have not also deduced a moral for those who would seek to improve our own condition by assimilating our institutions to those of America. Our own agitators, in their clamour for reform, are descending towards universal suffrage. Universal suffrage means, the government of a numerical majority, which means oppression— which means civil war. The Conservative belief in mixed representation was clear.

Another reason for a lull in the movement for reform was, according to Blackwood's, due to the good sense of the workingman.

The patient endurance of the suffering working-classes [during the cotton famine] is heroic. If we examine the causes of the great change which supervened, we shall find it first in the increased intercommunication between all parts of the country; and secondly, in the spread of education and intelligence. Unanimity of political feeling in England, therefore, cannot possibly signify anything else than political contentment.

The view of the worker remained that of respectability while the conservatism of writers in Blackwood's was constant—the franchise and the constitution should not be altered. That attitude changed as the movement for reform intensified.

In reaction to the Liberal program of 1864 for enfranchisement, Blackwood's defended the Conservatives: "It is no part of the political programme of the Conservatives to exclude the working-classes from a fair share of the franchise." The key words must be "fair share." As always has been true, the Conservative party did not wish to exclude the workers, but include them only to the extent that the existing system of representation would not be altered. In 1865, an essayist asked,
Does it therefore follow that the Conservatives desire, or ever desired, to exclude the working classes from exercising the franchise either in town or country? Quite otherwise. . . . If they hesitate about descending to a six-pound franchise, it is because the advocates of that arrangement are themselves dissatisfied with it, and never scruple, as often as the opportunity is presented, to speak of the descent to a six-pound franchise as a mere step in the right direction.16

To lower the franchise radically was to lower the worker.

Conservatives believed the worker should be raised up by imitating the manners of the governing class.

Now the Conservatives hold that the right direction lies upwards. They believe also that it is in the power of every intelligent, sober, and industrious artisan, to proceed in that direction, if he be willing; and they prefer keeping the franchise as it is, because while ready, with open arms, to welcome a voice in the management of public affairs those men who have shown that they understand how wisely to manage their own, they are not disposed to throw political power into the hands of an ignorant and improvident mob.16

It is clear that Conservatives believed the worker was capable of rising. Until then, reforms should not be attempted for fear of allowing the "ignorant and improvident" to overwhelm the system. In defending the Conservative party against Liberal programs for reform, the view of the worker was enhanced; enfranchisement was being considered.

The Conservative theme continued in 1866; a portion of the working class was respectable, but democracy, or the rule of mere numbers, was unacceptable.

In his own sphere, and employed about his own business, the working man deserves and commands our unqualified respect. Nay, more; we are just as anxious as Mr. Gladstone can be that the working man should possess his own share in the political influence of the country; and we are heartily glad to find that, by their own industry and good conduct, so large a proportion of working men are winning their way to the suffrage both in town and country. But for their sakes as well as for our own, we object to give them a monopoly of the representation.18
While earlier themes were struck once again, there was a sense that the Conservatives wanted to guide the workingmen who, in their innocence, did not understand politics. They objected to a monopoly of workingmen in Parliament "for their sakes" as well as for their own. The politically ignorant might be led astray.

In 1867, and after the Conservatives had passed the Second Reform Bill which enfranchised a greater proportion of workingmen than had been predicted, it must have been with wonder that the reader of *Blackwood's* beheld this statement:

> Oh, but, we are told, Mr. Disraeli's measure goes far beyond anything which the Liberals contemplated. Their object was to admit within the pale of the Constitution only the élite of the working classes—the honest, intelligent, upright, and patriotic artisan, to whom the rights of property and conscience are as sacred as these things can be to the highest noble in the land. Of the residuum—the mere drudges—the unthinking, uneducated, labouring men, who are prone to do in all things as their employers bid, and entertain a slavish respect for rank and state, of such as these they took no account, and they entirely object to their being taken account of by anybody else.\(^{19}\)

Holding up to ridicule images they had held indicates a change in attitude on the part of the writers in *Blackwood's*.

In contrast to the *Quarterly Review*, *Blackwood's* in 1867 had done its best to bring to prominence the image of respectability for all workingmen. This change indicates that the conservatism of the *Quarterly Review* was based on a belief in the constitution and the nation which was above politics. *Blackwood's*, however, remained Conservative in a political sense. When, therefore, a Conservative ministry brought forward a reform bill, contributors gave that bill their support and their view of the worker changed to include all workers in a favorable light. In January, it was written that
the working-men of England are not all Leaguers. The thousands who refused to turn out when summoned by Mr. Hartwell and his committee will obey the call of the constituted authorities, and give a very good account of the roughs and vagabonds who brought discredit upon them on a former occasion, and would willingly discredit them now.20

Only "roughs and vagabonds" were unrespectable, and they were not of the working class. Such views continued.

In February, a writer stated,

We think that the skilled mechanics of the country are, as a body, very superior, if not in intelligence, most certainly in honesty, to the small retail dealers, who... possess the privilege of voting for Members of Parliament.21

In June, contributors commented that "we may be wrong, but we would rather trust the working men of England to sustain the great institutions of this country, than we would trust not a few of their employers."22 In August, an essayist exclaimed,

Far be it from us to condemn whole classes because of the iniquities of some. There are, we firmly believe, in England and Scotland, thousands and tens of thousands of working men to whom not only are we prepared to concede the rights of citizenship to their fullest extent, but with whom in public and private, it would be an honour to be associated in any undertaking to which we should care to set our hands.23

Blackwood's was aligned with the interests of the Conservative party. It should, therefore, come as no great surprise that the image of respectability for all workingmen gained prominence in the year when Conservatives brought forward their bill for reform. While the conservatism of the Quarterly Review prompted writers to decry the Conservative Second Reform Bill of 1867, the political Conservatism of Blackwood's caused one writer to accuse a Conservative and fellow writer of the Quarterly Review of a "grave crime against his country."24 because of his predictions of disaster.
The Edinburgh Review was, in contrast to previous periodicals, tied to the interests of the Liberal party. As for the Conservatives, one writer hoped "that the vice of their political principles might be neutralised by the laxity of their political morality." In regard to the image of the workingman, this periodical was consistent in its praise and insistence that the worker should be enfranchised.

In 1857, it was noted that

the last quarter of a century has conferred upon this nation a marked advance in intelligence, education, and knowledge, as well as in prosperity, and industrial power; we think the political franchise ought to be conferred on a larger number of our fellow countrymen, because we believe a larger number of our fellow countrymen are qualified to exercise it.

This attitude did not mean that democracy was desired.

Whilst one section of the advocates of Parliamentary Reform at this time desires to extend the franchise, and to purify the representation only so far as may be consistent with the maintenance of the existing system of Parliamentary Government, another section of Reformers is seeking to demoralise the House of Commons, and at the same time to extend its powers. Probably a large majority of the Liberal party, including certainly the most eminent and enlightened of its members, would concur with us in declaring that the former of these alternatives is the object of their policy.

Political moderation guided even the actions of Liberals, but in regard to their view of the workers, they were described only in the most favorable terms.

The workingman's image continued to be enhanced in 1859. Education not only improved the worker's intelligence, but it also demonstrated its value in reducing the worker's propensity for violence and unrespectable actions.

Partly by voluntary efforts, and partly by public aid, popular education has been widely diffused. The influence of the cheap press has contributed to the spread of the useful knowledge; and an undoubted advance in the intelligence of all ranks of
society is observable. Among the working classes this advance has shown itself in the absence of machine-breaking and rick-burning, and generally in the abstinence from organised violence. . . . It is our belief that no socialist or anarchical views are entertained by any large classes of our population, either in town or country, and that all alarmist reasonings founded upon that supposition are erroneous.  

By deed and through the efforts of education, the workingman was pronounced respectable. Even in regard to trade organization, the writers were conciliatory.

We must still go on patiently relying on the effect of education, and the teachings of experience; and we may do this the more easily for the evidence we have of the growing wisdom of certain classes of workmen—as the Lancashire cotton spinners—in regard to the principle and policy of trade regulation by irresponsible authorities. But, while deprecating the revival of restrictions, and trusting chiefly to the growth of intelligence, we still believe that the Legislature can do something for the protection of the labourer from the coercion of his fellows.

Protection was needed for the innocent worker who might be corrupted, and respectability was proven by the workers' actions.

In 1860, these two themes were reemphasized. "The great necessity is . . . to improve the education in the schools, and adapt it chiefly to the uses of the labourer and artisan." At the same time,

the working classes have been tried with republicanism, Americanism, and even with socialism, but they will have none of these prescriptions. They love the monarchy, they take pride in the aristocracy, they rather trade with America than fight with her, but they would rather fight than imitate her.

Workingmen could not be seen in a better light; even they did not want a dictatorship of numbers. The message was that, as Englishmen, workers believed in the same things the governing class believed in.

The images continued to be repeated. In an article about colliers, one contributor said,
The great moral which is learnt by practical and personal efforts to improve the social condition of the workman is patience and perseverance: patience to inquire into facts, to investigate causes, and to bear disappointment; perseverance to toil on, to plan afresh, and to wait for the aid of the most powerful of all auxiliaries—Time.\textsuperscript{32}

In an article on cooperative societies, the author reached this conclusion:

It is enough to be grateful for, that a considerable body of men and women have found the way to bridge over the deep and widening gulf which has existed between the moneyed and the labouring classes in our country; that they have proved that the best things of life are at the command of that labouring class; that they have checked that expenditure of millions yearly in drink and smoking which has been our greatest social discouragement; that they have shown how moderate toil, allowing leisure for intellectual culture and moral enjoyment, will sustain the comfort and independence of temperate and prudent households; and above all, that when the thing is set about properly, co-operation may be as productive as competition, while far less expensive in the use. As to the moral superiority of the brotherly principle to that of rivalry, there can, we suppose, be no question.\textsuperscript{33}

Neither can there be any question that the image of the workingmen in \textit{The Edinburgh Review} was such as to induce parliamentarians to enfranchise them. They were, after all, constantly improving and rising to meet the expectations of the governing class. "There is growing up outside the franchise a very large and increasing body of intelligent men who cannot be permanently excluded from our electoral limits."\textsuperscript{34} If the writers for this periodical were disconcerted when the Conservatives enfranchised the workingman, they did not show it.

\textit{The Westminster Review} was not linked to any particular party but to the philosophical radicals. Like \textit{The Edinburgh Review}, however, the almost unqualified image of workingmen was the same: innocent and respectable, and their enfranchisement was recommended.

It is for the \textit{artisans} pre-eminently that access to the suffrage is desired. This is the class of the community which in the last
thirty years has enormously increased in intelligence, moral worth, organization and self-reliance: a class much higher in independence of thought, and in social ability to speak aloud as they think, than a very large part of the existing voters.\(^{35}\)

Another article indicated that only an irrational and small percentage of the populace believed the artisans would confiscate property if they were allowed to take part in the government.\(^{36}\) Even an article about strikes maintained the image.

One prominent feature of our present social condition is the rapidly advancing intelligence of the artisan population. Railways, cheap literature, cheap reading-rooms have all combined to produce a wondrous change. The working classes have been until within a few years the helpless victims of unjust laws and of oppressive taxation. Now they are regarded as a great power in the State, and are appealed to as such. What more natural than at first awakening into this higher existence there should be a reaction, and that they should be eager to combine for any objects which they wish to secure.\(^{37}\)

The workers had good reason to strike and form unions because they had been oppressed for so long.

The unionists are all good workmen because no one is admitted who has not thoroughly learnt his trade. Men of an independent spirit are naturally attracted to their ranks, because they cannot bear the humiliation of being at the mercy of tyrannical masters and brutal foremen, who are often no better than slave-drivers. As members of a society they can hold up their heads firmly against caprice and petty injustice.\(^{38}\)

The philosophical radicals' belief in the worth of individuals was evident. No one should be subjected to the whims of harsh masters; all members of society should have freedom to pursue their interests and the worker's independent spirit was applauded.

An aberration from the image occurred in 1862 when a writer said,

It is a sad confession to make, but it is forced on us by facts--the bulk of the working classes is indifferent [to religion], and
amongst those who are not indifferent, it is the less thoughtful who believe, and the more thoughtful who deny or doubt.\textsuperscript{39}

Whether or not this was a statement on the worker or the decline of the importance of religion in Victorian England is not clear, but it is clear that if this writer's opinion was about the worker, he was drowned out by the unanimity that followed. For example, the writer of an article on strikes concluded that cooperatives were the answer to labor problems and could be realized because of "the growth of good feeling and intelligence among the working classes."\textsuperscript{40} Reform was advocated "because there are too many intelligent people excluded from the franchise and because the machinery which was suitable in 1832 is naturally obsolete in 1865."\textsuperscript{41}

As the Conservatives hammered out the details of the Second Reform Bill, one writer remarked on the future benefits of reforms.

As the result of the more direct and comprehensive action of the nation over its affairs, we anticipate the growth of a sounder public opinion, an opinion so powerful and penetrating that even 'good' society will be unable to resist its influence. Acting as a political unit, the people will hereafter be able to strive after a loftier and purer ideal than that which hitherto has been the object of national ambition.\textsuperscript{42}

The inclusion of workingmen in Parliament would give it, according to this contributor and in consonance with the beliefs of the philosophical radicals, a new sense of moral responsibility.

The party system was only beginning to form when the Conservatives passed the Second Reform Bill of 1867. The actions of a rival party might be fought with all the oratorical skill and parliamentary maneuvers that the opposition possessed. As the conscience of Victorians, however, these periodicals, despite their reflection of political changes, conveyed a different message. Class
divisions, when measured against the homogeneity of the British people, were small matters. Political factions should be subsumed by the larger union of the nation, and the workingman was an integral part of the larger community of Englishmen.
CHAPTER 3 ENDNOTES


4 "Bright Absurdities," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 84 (December, 1858): 748.


13 "Democracy Teaching by Example," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 90 (October, 1861): 405.


"The Bill As It Is," loc. cit.


Chapter 4

THE MORALISTS

An examination of Victorian novels and histories finds the view of the worker, when one was given, to be the same as noted in previous chapters. With few exceptions, these forms of literature had no relation to political actions. As a result, novelists and historians did not have to concern themselves with the practical consequences of those actions. They were concerned with telling a story. Within those stories, however, the reader may discern a view of the worker which represented a lesson to be learned, a moral to the story. Not only did Victorian novelists want to amuse, they wanted to instruct. Because these forms of literature are different in nature from previous forms, they must be examined in a different way.

There are a number of reasons why novels must be treated in a cautious manner. First, they are not forthright declarations. The author of a novel wants to tell a story and, in doing so, uses more vague terms. For example, in what class would a Becky Sharp or a Mr. Micawber be placed? It might be said that both are in a class by themselves. Second, the subtleties of literature, evident in all the forms of literature studied—but, perhaps, to a greater degree in novels—make the task more difficult. Because of the use of satire, figures of speech, imagery, and humor, the words do not always mean what they say and they must be taken in the context of the story.
Third, in the seven novels studied herein, it must be remembered that they are but a sampling of the works of the most popular novelists to discover if an impression of the workingman was given and, if so, what it was. Exact figures are difficult to discover and analyze because most of the novels originally were published in serial form over a period of many months. It is difficult, therefore, to ascertain which were the most popular. Those who question my choices must concede that these seven novelists were seven of the most popular writers.

*Coningsby*, published in 1844, was chosen for an obvious reason. Its author, Benjamin Disraeli, has been credited with achieving the passage of the Second Reform Bill. The book's setting is aristocratic and its tone political, but the image of the workingman was clear when Coningsby, the hero, went to visit in Manchester. He saw with wonder the machines that gave the town its life and described them so:

> A machine is a slave that neither brings nor bears degradation; it is a being endowed with the greatest degree of energy, and acting under the greatest degree of excitement, yet free at the same time from all passion and emotion.  

Free from "passion and emotion," yet the machine lived and breathed a life of its own. The machine even had a voice.

> Does not the spindle sing like a merry girl at her work, and the steam-engine roar in jolly chorus, like a strong artisan handling his lusty tools, and gaining a fair day's wages for a fair day's toil?  

The machine was alive, as the worker was alive—and the workers were happy in the knowledge that good work was being done for which payment in kind was received.
Some Victorian writers chose to dwell on the sordid conditions under which the workers toiled, but Coningsby saw a workroom where a thousand or fifteen hundred girls may be observed in their coral necklaces, working like Penelope in the daytime; some pretty, some pert, some graceful and jocund, some absorbed in their occupation, a little serious, few sad. The image the reader receives is of the workers' industry, intelligence, and good will, as Coningsby saw them.

From his observations, Coningsby arrived at the conclusion that the nation had ignored a valuable resource.

In this unprecedented partnership between capital and science, working on a spot which Nature had indicated as the fitting theatre of their exploits, he beheld a great source of the wealth of nations which had been reserved for these times, and he perceived that this wealth was rapidly developing classes whose power was imperfectly recognised in the constitutional scheme, and whose duties in the social system seemed altogether omitted.

It is evident that Coningsby thought the workingman should be included in the British system because that class was an unrecognized power that could be used and whose work could benefit society.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, published in 1847, is the story of a girl who, of the gentry by birth, is brought low by the death of her parents. After an attack of illness, the young Jane was asked if she would like to live with poor relatives.

I reflected. Poverty looks grim to grown people; still more so the children; they have not much idea of industrious, working, respectable poverty; they think of the word only as connected with ragged clothes, scanty food, fireless grates, rude manners, and debasing vices: poverty for me was synonymous with degradation.

It is clear that the author's intent was to convey to the reader that Jane's perception was wrong.

The same battle between Jane's perception of the working class and the image the author wished to evoke occurred when Jane had to
become a teacher of working-class girls; Jane was appalled at their lack of knowledge. Few could read, and none of them could write or do arithmetic. Yet, she told herself,

I must not forget that these coarsely-clad little peasants are of flesh and blood as good as the scions of gentlest genealogy; and that the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are as likely to exist in their hearts as in those of the best-born. My duty will be to develop these germs; surely I shall find some happiness in discharging that office.  

The battle continued within Jane as she became aware of the prejudices she carried. From that awareness, she could fight what she knew to be a wrong impression.

Was I very gleeeful, settled, content, during the hours I passed in yonder bare, humble schoolroom this morning and afternoon? . . . I felt—yes, idiot that I am--I felt degraded. I doubted I had taken a step which sank instead of raising me in the scale of social existence. I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard and saw around me. But let me not hate and despise myself too much for these feelings; I know them to be wrong—that is a great step gained; I shall strive to overcome them.

It is apparent the author means Jane's battle to be the reader's, and Jane's triumph over her aversion to this lower class to be the reader's triumph also.

Jane did overcome her feelings.

I stood with the key in my hand, exchanging a few words of special farewell with some half-dozen of my best scholars: as decent, respectable, modest, and well-informed young women as could be found in the ranks of the British peasantry. And that is saying a great deal; for, after all, the British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered, most self-respecting of any in Europe.

Brontë apparently understood the governing class well. She knew that the best way to influence the governing class's impression of the workingmen was to give Jane Eyre their prejudices and allow them to be won over, as was Jane. The image of respectability triumphed in the end.
A more subtle novel is William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, concerned mainly with exposing the pretensions of the governing class. The image of the working class, however, might be discerned in Thackeray's chapter on how Rawdon and Becky Crawley lived on nothing and lived well. The story included Mr. Bowls who, through perseverance and industry, rose from being a member of a household staff to owning his own shop. "He was a good man; good and happy. The house [he rented out] brought him in so handsome a yearly income, that he was determined to send his children to good schools." Like the governing class, Mr. Bowls had ambition and he imitated the manners of those above him. Unfortunately, Mr. Bowls was ruined by the Crawleys' profligacy.

In the same vein, Thackeray wrote about Becky's neglected child.

When the Frenchwoman went away, the little fellow, howling in the loneliness of the night, had compassion taken on him by a housemaid, who took him out of his solitary nursery into her bed in the garret hard by, and comforted him. . . . Rawdon had stolen off though, to look after his son and heir; and came back to the company when he found that honest Dolly was consoling the child.

Thackeray's intent was to expose the pretensions and cruelty of the governing class; at the same time he described those of the working class as industrious, persevering, honest, and anxious to please and imitate the manners of those above them.

Turning to the governing class, however, Thackeray's sharp wit is evident.

You who see your betters bearing up under this shame [of being brought low] every day, meekly suffering under the slights of fortune, gentle and unpitied, poor, and rather despised for their poverty, do you ever step down from your prosperity, and wash the feet of these poor wearied beggars? The very thought of them is
odious and low. 'There must be classes—there must be rich and poor,' Dives says, smacking his claret—(it is well if he even sends the broken meat out to Lazarus sitting under the window). Very true; but think how mysterious and often unaccountable it is—that lottery of life which gives to this man the purple and fine linen, and sends to the other rags for garments and dogs for comforters.\(^{11}\)

Again, Thackeray attacked.

The hidden and awful Wisdom which apportions the destinies of mankind is pleased so to humiliate and cast down the tender, good, and wise; and to set up the selfish, or foolish, or the wicked. Oh, be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving. Think, what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire.\(^{12}\)

Not only were those beneath the governing class "tender, good, and wise," but the predominance of the governing class over them also was a mere accident—not a sign that they were in any way better.

While Thackeray intruded to hammer the messages home, Charles Dickens relied on his characters to convey the image of the workingman.

In Dickens's *David Copperfield*, published from 1849 to 1850, the reader must see things through the eyes of David. To rely on the author's words might lead one astray. For example, David described a man known as Littimer in these words:

There was a servant in that house, a man who, I understand, was usually with Steerforth, and had come into his service at the University, who was in appearance a pattern of respectability. I believe there never existed in his station a more respectable-looking man. He was taciturn, soft-footed, very quiet in his manner, deferential, observant, always at hand when wanted, and never near when not wanted, but his great claim to consideration was his respectability.\(^{13}\)

If words could be trusted, the reader might find this an example of the image of a fine workingman; but, appearances deceive. The reader should be forewarned by David's discomfort around Lattimer who turns out to be a thoroughly disreputable character. I do not believe,
however, that Dickens meant to disparage the worker; it is more likely that he was making fun of the image itself. This example serves to underscore the importance of caution and the importance of good actions over appearance.

Who was revered in David's eyes? As is evident from David's descriptions, he revered the extended family of Peggotty, his mother's servant, who was the first example the reader meets of the working class. Peggotty was defended by David as

the best, the truest, the most faithful, most devoted, and most self-denying friend and servant in the world, who had ever loved me dearly, who had ever loved my mother dearly, who had held my mother's dying head upon her arm, on whose face my mother had imprinted her last grateful kiss.14

David remembered her brother, Mr. Peggotty.

He stands before me again, his bluff hairy face irradiating with a joyful love and pride for which I can find no description. His honest eyes fire up, and sparkle, as if their depths were stirred by something bright. His broad chest heaves with pleasure. His strong loose hands clench themselves, in his earnestness, and he emphasizes what he says with a right arm that shows, in my pigmy view, like a sledge hammer.15

Another member of this extended family was described--Ham, who was engaged to Emily.

Ham was a boat-builder in these days, having improved a natural ingenuity in that handicraft, until he had become a skilled workman. He was in his working-dress, and looked rugged enough, but manly withal, and a very fit protector for the blooming little creature at his side. Indeed, there was a frankness in his face, an honesty, and an undisguised show of pride in her, and his love for her, which were, to me, the best of good looks.16

These descriptions are of working people and, although they are in David's words, the reader must look to their actions also in order to be certain the impression of respectability is correct.

Peggotty's goodness was evident throughout the book. For example, when David was sent away by his stepfather, it was Peggotty
who sneaked out to meet him on the road, giving him cakes and money, and hugging him so hard her buttons popped. As was indicated in David's description of her, Peggotty stayed with his mother until she died, despite the trying conditions of her employment under his stepfather. In the same way, Mr. Peggotty indicated his goodness after Emily's disgrace. David noted.

Rarely did that hour of the evening come, rarely did I wake at night, rarely did I look up at the moon, or stars, or watch the falling rain, or hear the wind, but I thought of his solitary figure toiling on, poor pilgrim, and recalled the words: "I'm a-going to seek her, fur and wide. If any hurt should come to me, remember that the last words I left for her was, 'My unchanged love is with my darling child, and I forgive her.'"18

Finally, Ham also displayed the characteristic of goodness. He told David to tell Emily that he forgave her. The final irony came when Ham lost his life trying to save those on board a sinking ship, including the man who had ruined his fiancée, Emily. "He had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled for ever." Through their actions, the impression of the praiseworthy and respectable workingman was secured.

Another family might have impressed the reader, that of the Omers. The shop in which they worked was pleasantly described, but more importantly their actions gained David's respect. They were sympathetic about Emily's plight, and they offered money to Martha, another fallen woman who had befriended Emily. As Mr. Omer said,

The way I look at it is that we are all drawing on to the bottom of the hill, whatever age we are, on account of time never standing still for a single moment. So let us always do a kindness, and be over-rejoiced. To be sure!22

The goodness of these working people could not fail to impress the reader, especially when set in opposition to middle-class unkindness.
The manufacturers were redeemed in Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell's *North* and *South*, published from 1854 to 1855.

The key to understanding Gaskell's novel may be found in the following statement about Margaret Hale, the heroine: "It was not the long, bleak sunny days of spring, nor yet was it that time was reconciling her to the town of her habitation. It was that in it she had found a human interest." Like Jane Eyre, Margaret had been brought low by the circumstance of her father having resigned from the church. As a result, the family had to move to a northern manufacturing town. Like Jane, Margaret had her prejudices about workingmen; but, by getting to know some of them personally, she overcame those prejudices. Her prejudices were evident when Margaret said to her mother,

*I don't like shopy people. I think we are far better off, knowing only cottagers and labourers, and people without pretence.*

I call mine a very comprehensive taste; I like all people whose occupations have to do with land.

While the agricultural laborer seems to be given a good image, this reader is led to believe that Margaret connected the land with the life of the gentry. As for the laborers in towns, Margaret remarked, "Well, mama, I give up the cotton-spinners; I am not standing up for them, any more than for any other tradespeople. Only we shall have little enough to do with them." Once the family had moved, "Margaret was repelled by the rough uncourteous manners of these people; not but what she shrunk with fastidious pride from their hale-fellow accost, and severely resented their unconcealed curiosity." The Hales
then met Nicholas Higgins and his daughter, Bessy, and, through them, other working people.

The image given of the workingman, once an acquaintance had been made, was that of the oppressed. Margaret said,

I see men here going about in the streets who look ground down by some pinching sorrow or care—who are not only sufferers but haters. Now, in the South we have our poor, but there is not that terrible expression in their countenances of a sullen sense of injustice which I see there.27

Furthermore, "Mr. Hale had his own acquaintances among the working-men, and was depressed with their earnestly-told tales of suffering and long endurance.28

The oppression under which the workers lived caused Margaret to sympathize with their condition.

I suppose each mode of life produces its own trials and its own temptations. The dweller in towns must find it as difficult to be patient and calm, as the country-bred man must find it to be active, and equal to unwonted emergencies. Both must find it hard to realize a future of any kind; the one because the present is so living and hurrying and close around him; the other because his life tempts him to revel in the mere sense of animal existence, not knowing of, and consequently not caring for any pungency of pleasure, for the attainment of which he can plan, and deny himself and look forward.29

Understanding, in turn, led to reconciliation. "Margaret the Churchwoman, her father the Dissenter, Higgins the Infidel, knelt down together. It did them no harm."30

A similar journey from prejudice to understanding was taken by Mr. Thornton, the manufacturer. Like Margaret, he had prejudices against the working class even though he had lived close to them all his life.

He was but like many others—men, women, and children—alive to distant, and dead to near things. He sought to possess the influence of a name in foreign countries and faraway seas—to
become the head of a firm that should be known for generations; and it had taken him long silent years to come even now to a glimmering of what he might be now, to-day, here in his own town, his own factory, among his own people. He and they had led parallel lives—very close, but never touching—till the accident (or so it seemed) of his acquaintance with Higgins.31

Like Margaret, Mr. Thornton came to a new understanding once he knew his workers. From their acquaintance, Mr. Thornton grew to respect them. Once brought face to face, man to man, with an individual of the masses around him, and (take notice) out of the character of master and workman, in the first instance, they had each begun to recognize that 'we have all of us one human heart.' It was the fine point of the wedge. . . . Until now, he had never recognized how much and how deep was the interest he had grown of late to feel in his position as manufacturer, simply because it led him into such close contact, and gave him the opportunity of so much power, among a race of people strange, shrewd, ignorant; but, above all, full of character and strong human feeling.32

The impression is that any meanness of spirit was caused by the workers' oppression, and that if they could be known and treated as fellow human beings, their true characters—goodness and respectability—would emerge.

Not all novels were as concerned with the workingman as Gaskell's. For example, Anthony Trollope dealt with the workingman obliquely in his _Barchester Towers_, published in 1857. The brief description of a farmer served to raise the image of respectability.

There was living in the parish, about half a mile from the vicarage on the road to the city, a decent, kindly farmer, well to do as regards this world, and so far mindful of the next that he attended his parish church with decent regularity. To him, Mrs. Quiverful had before now appealed in some of her more pressing family troubles, and had not appealed in vain. . . . Mrs. Quiverful did not mention the purpose of her business, nor did the farmer alloy his kindness by any unseemly questions.33

It is, however, more like Trollope to find human characteristics in all his characters; the following description of Mrs. Thorne's party
preparations is most representative of the author's beliefs:

There was a dreadful line to be drawn. Who were to dispose themselves within the ha-ha, and who without? To this the unthinking will give an off-hand answer, as they will to every ponderous question. Oh, the bishop and such like within the ha-ha; and Farmer Greenacre and such like without. True, my unthinking friend; but who shall define these such-likes? It is in such definitions that the whole difficulty of society consists. To seat the bishop on an arm chair on the lawn and place Farmer Greenacre at the end of a long table is easy enough; but where will you put Mrs. Lookaloft, whose daughters go to a fashionable seminary in Barchester, who calls her farm house Rosebank, and who has a pianoforte in her drawingroom?  

With a bow to Trollope's subtle humor, the reader must note the inconsequential things that divided the classes. The arbitrary line had become blurred as laborers took on the pretensions of the governing class and their aura of respectability.

Obliqueness was not George Eliot's intent when she wrote *Adam Bede*, published in 1859. The reader meets Adam as he worked in his carpenter shop.

It was to this workman that the strong barytone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer singing—

*Awake, my soul, and with the sun*  
*Thy daily stage of duty run;*  
*Shake off dull sloth . . .*  

Here some measurement was to be taken which required some more concentrated attention, and the sonorous voice subsided into a low whistle; but it presently broke out again with renewed vigor—

*Let all thy converse be sincere,*  
*Thy conscience as the noonday clear.*

Such a voice could only come from a broad chest, and the broad chest belonged to a large-boned, muscular man nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work, he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeve rolled up above the elbow showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long supple hand, with its broad finger-tips, looked ready for works of skill. In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon, and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly marked, prominent and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood. The face was large and
roughly hewn, and when in repose had no other beauty than such as
belongs to an expression of good-humoured honest intelligence.\textsuperscript{35}

It is probable that few parliamentarians knew a workingman
personally. Perhaps Eliot thought an introduction was necessary
between the worker and the governing class. First impressions can be
crucial, and Adam was described in such a way as to create a favorable
image in the reader's mind. He was exact in his work, sang hymns as
he toiled, and was physically described in terms which the reader would
associate with uprightness, patriotism, and education.

Adam's actions served only to underscore his respectability.
He berated his fellow workers for stopping and not finishing their
work because the clock had struck six.\textsuperscript{36} He was religious in his own
way,\textsuperscript{37} he went to school after work,\textsuperscript{38} he stayed up all night to finish
work his father had promised and not done,\textsuperscript{39} he used his savings to buy
his brother's freedom from service in the army,\textsuperscript{40} he refused to leave
his family and pursue his own interests because the family needed him,\textsuperscript{41}
and he had plans to start his own business some day.\textsuperscript{42} Adam's only
fault was that he was so respectable he could not understand moral
weakness in others.\textsuperscript{43}

If Adam strained the bounds of credibility, Eliot stepped in
to make her feelings about the workingman clear. She conceded that
Adam was not an "ordinary character among workmen" and that to believe
all workingmen were like him would be a mistake,
yet such men as he are reared here and there in every generation of
our peasant artisans—with an inheritance of affections nurtured by
a simple family life of common need and common industry, and an
inheritance of faculties trained in skilful courageous labour:
they make their way upwards, rarely as geniuses, most commonly as
painsstaking honest men, with the skill and conscience to do well
the tasks that lie before them.\textsuperscript{44}
Such men might live out their days in obscurity, but proof that they had toiled there remained long after they were gone.

You are almost sure to find there some good piece of road, some building, some application of mineral produce, some improvement in farming practice, some reform of parish abuses, with which their names are associated by one or two generations after them. Their employers were the richer for them, the work of their hands has worn well, and the work of their brains has guided well the hands of other men. They went about in their youth in flannel or paper caps, in coats black with coal-dust or streaked with lime and red paint; in old age their white hairs are seen in a place of honour at church and at market, and they tell their well-dressed sons and daughters, seated round the bright hearth on winter evenings, how pleased they were when they first earned their twopence a-day. Others there are who die poor and never put off the workman's coat on weekdays. They have not had the art of getting rich, but they are men of trust, and when they die before the work is all out of them, it is as if some main screw had got loose in a machine; the master who employed them says, 'Where shall I find their like?'

It is evident that, if Adam was better than most workingmen, the average worker was no less respectable and worthy of the governing class's trust.

If the writers of history do not use the subtle devices of novelists, the task of discovering the image of the workingman is not less difficult. The histories read by Victorians were not concerned with the nineteenth century, and the image, if there was one, is buried within other information not essential to the task or it is written between the lines. It is to one's advantage, then, that historians, like other Victorian writers, occasionally offered their opinions.

Such was the case in Henry Hallam's *The Constitutional History of England*, published in 1827. He argued that a republican form of government was not incompatible with the English temperament. The English people were too sensible not to improve their form of government or allow such improvements to degenerate.
For the British are, as a people, little subject to those bursts of passion which inflame the more imaginative multitude of southern climates, and render them both apt for revolutions and incapable of conducting them. Nor are they again of that sluggish and stationary temper which chokes all desire of improvement, and even all zeal for freedom and justice, through which some free governments have degenerated into corrupt oligarchies.

The American system was proof that those of English descent could live within a republican form of government.

The most conspicuously successful experiment of republican institutions (and those far more democratical than, according to the general theory of politics, could be reconciled with perfect tranquility) has taken place in a people of English original; and though much must here be ascribed to the peculiarly fortunate situation of the nation to which I allude, we can hardly avoid giving some weight to the good sense and well-balanced temperament which have come in their inheritance with our laws and our language.

As members of the English people, the workingman must have those qualities of character which would make them eligible to take part in a republican form of government.

In *Sartor Resartus*, written by Thomas Carlyle and published from 1833 to 1834, two points were made which might have formed the reader's image of the workingman. First, the point was made that only clothes determine a man's status.

*Man is a Spirit*, and bound by invisible bonds to *All Men*; . . . he wears *Clothes*, which are the visible emblems of that fact. Has not your Red hanging-individual a horsehair wig, squirrel-skins, and a plush-gown; whereby all mortals know that he is a JUDGE?—Society, which the more I think of it astonishes me the more, is founded upon Cloth.

Furthermore, such divisions were disparaged.

The beginning of all Wisdom is to look fixedly on Clothes, or even with armed eyesight, till they become transparent. "The Philosopher," says the wisest of this age, "must station himself in the middle"; how true! The Philosopher is he to whom the Highest has descended, and the Lowest has mounted up; who is the equal and kindly brother of all.
Shall we tremble before clothwebs and cobwebs, whether woven
in Arkwright looms, or by the silent Arachnes that weave
unrestingly in our imagination? Or, on the other hand, what is
there that we cannot love; since all was created by God?49

It is evident that Carlyle believed the division of society into classes
was arbitrary and based upon the inconsequential matter of dress. All
men were created by the same God and deserved the same consideration.

A second point was more directly made in Teufelsdörckh's notes
when he described those whom he honored, and the first to be honored
was "the toilworn Craftsman."50 The description depicted a man who had
worked hard and honorably all his life.

Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein
notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of
the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face,
all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it
is the face of a Man living manlike.51

Furthermore, the craftsman's toil had been to provide others
with the necessities of life, not for his own gain.

Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were
thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed: thou wert our Conscript,
on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For
in thee too lay a god-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded;
encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of
Labour: and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet
toil on, toil on: thou art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou
toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.52

Workingmen were set apart as those to be honored because others enjoyed
the accoutrements of luxury at their expense. Out of the necessity of
the workers' labor for their "daily bread," emerged a nobility that was
not based on dress but on a sense of duty and responsibility to
society.

The theme of Lord Macaulay's The History of England, the first
two volumes were published in 1848, was that England continually was
improving.
In every experimental science there is a tendency towards perfection. In every human being there is a wish to ameliorate his own condition. These two principles have often sufficed, even when counteracted by great public calamities and by bad institutions, to carry civilisation forward.53

This especially was true in regard to the lower classes.

Still more important is the benefit which all orders of society, and especially the lower orders, have derived from the mollifying influence of civilisation on the national character. . . . . . . The more we study the annals of the past the more shall we rejoice that we live in a merciful age, in an age in which cruelty is abhorred, and in which pain, even when deserved, is inflicted reluctantly and from a sense of duty. Every class doubtless has gained largely by this great moral change: but the class which has gained most is the poorest, the most dependent, and the most defenceless.54

The image of the oppressed innocent was engendered with these words; but, at the same time, if all things improve, the workingman must have been improving in character.

Henry Thomas Buckle's Introduction to the History of Civilisation in England, the first volumes were published in 1857, was of little help. Buckle's attempt to merge science and history and produce laws of history left little room for an image of workingmen. They were but a part of economic laws.55 Furthermore, Buckle's claim that knowledge was needed to further civilization56 might have impressed the reader, but whether or not he applied that need to workingmen is impossible to ascertain.

Buckle did make an interesting comment on political matters:

It is a mere matter of history that our legislators, even to the last moment, were so terrified by the idea of innovation that they refused every reform, until the voice of the people rose high enough to awe them into submission, and forced them to grant what, without such pressure, they would by no means have conceded.57

From such an admonition the parliamentarian might consider reform or stand firm against anything which threatened force. Nonetheless, it
is clear that Buckle was not interested in forming any image of the workingman.

James Anthony Froude published his first volume—there were twelve—of the *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth* in 1856. That he was aware of the various opinions about the workingman was illustrated in a discussion about different attitudes toward estates. On the one hand,

the advocates for a peasant proprietary tell us truly, that a landed monopoly is dangerous; that the possession of a spot of ground, though it be but a few acres, is the best security for loyalty, giving the state a pledge for its owner, and creating in the body of a nation a free, vigorous, and manly spirit.58

On the other hand,

the advocates for the large estates tell us, that the masses are too ill-educated to be trusted with independence; that without authority over them, these small proprietors become wasteful, careless, improvident; that the free spirit becomes a democratic and dangerous spirit; and finally, that the resources of the land cannot be brought out by men without capital to cultivate it.59

Note that the same arguments were used to bolster the views for and against workingmen in regard to their being allowed to take part in the government.

More to the point, Froude made this observation:

The working-man of modern times has bought the extension of his liberty at the price of his material comfort. The higher classes have gained in luxury what they have lost in power. It is not for the historian to balance advantages. His duty is with the facts.60

Froude's summary is a fit ending for this study. His impartiality, in regard to the workingman, is a forerunner of the scholarly work of modern historians. His appraisal was realistic; change means neither unbounded improvement nor absolute ruin. Froude's assessment, however, was not the view given by the majority of the novels and histories.
The moralists, those whose purpose included instruction as well as amusement, offered a view of the worker that stressed the similarities between the worker and the governing class. Class divisions were subordinated to the larger community of the nation.
CHAPTER 4 ENDNOTES


22Ibid., p. 730.


24Ibid., p. 15.

25Ibid., p. 41.

26Ibid., p. 65.

27Ibid., p. 76.

28Ibid., p. 146.

29Ibid., pp. 291-292.

30Ibid., p. 225.

31Ibid., pp. 407-408.

32Ibid., p. 408.


34Ibid., p. 560.


36Ibid., p. 15.

37Ibid.

38Ibid., p. 16.

39Ibid., p. 38.

40Ibid., p. 42.

41Ibid., p. 45.

42Ibid., p. 181.

43Ibid., p. 166.

44Ibid., p. 168.


47 Ibid.


49 Ibid., p. 67.

50 Ibid., p. 227.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., pp. 227-228.


54 Ibid., pp. 417-418.


56 Ibid., p. 128.

57 Ibid., p. 284.


59 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

60 Ibid., p. 92.
Chapter 5

THE VALUE OF LITERATURE

Literature is valuable to this study for two reasons. First, it often has been said that literature is an expression of the beliefs of the society from which it comes. In other words, to know a society, one should read its literature. Second, the tradition of English literature is to instruct as well as amuse. If a person makes an effort to memorize lines from literature, it may be concluded that the individual has taken the time to read and that what has been read has impressed the person in some way.

A study of the parliamentary debates in 1867 indicates that literature influenced parliamentarians because they quoted from it extensively, and even newspapers were not exempt from exerting an influence. For example, the Hon. William Owen Stanley, Member of Parliament (M. P.) from Beaumaris, Wales, asked to read a paragraph to the House of Commons which recently had appeared in The Times in reference to a debate on the statutes of the Plantagenets. A letter to The Times was referred to by William Edward Forster, M. P. from Bradford, York County, in reference to a debate on the employment of volunteers in civil disturbances. Mr. William Ewart, M. P. from Dumfries, Scotland, remarked that "he was struck the other day in reading in The Times a quotation." Sir Lawrence Palk, M. P. from Devon County, quoted a letter to the editor of The Times in reference
to a resolution on the Totnes elections. Another letter to The Times was quoted by the Right Hon. H. T. L. Corry, First Lord of the Admiralty and M. P. from Tyrone County, in reference to a question about the Greenwich Hospital.

In a debate on parliamentary reform, W. B. Brett, M. P. from Helston, quoted a writer in The Times. In the House of Lords, the Earl of Shaftesbury referred to a paragraph in The Times concerning the Glossop convent. That same topic produced a reference to The Times by the Right Hon. G. Hardy, Secretary of State for the Home Department. The Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, M. P. from Merthyr Tydvil, referred to an article in The Times in reference to the Education of the Poor Bill. In the House of Lords, the Earl of Shaftesbury referred, during a debate on parliamentary reform, to an article in The Times from its correspondent in America. Regarding a statue of Mr. Canning, A. J. Beresford Hope, M. P. from Stoke-on-Trent, called the House's attention to an article in The Times. All of these references to articles in The Times indicate that parliamentarians read the London newspaper which had the greatest circulation. Other forms of literature also were used.

Perhaps the most quotable writer in the British language is William Shakespeare. Lines from his literature were used often by parliamentarians to help them make their points. For example, Shakespeare was quoted by Arthur John Otway, M. P. from Kent County, regarding the issue of flogging in the army; by Stephen Cave, M. P. from Sussex County, during a debate on the Sale and Purchase of Shares Bill; by Sir Francis Crossley, M. P. from York County, in regard to parliamentary reform; by Edmund John Synan, M. P. from Limerick County, in regard to the Tenants Improvements Bill; and by John
Bright, M. P. from Birmingham, during a debate on parliamentary reform. Also, lines written by John Milton were used by Benjamin Disraeli, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by David Pugh, M. P. from Carmarthenshire, both in regard to parliamentary reform. Other writers, some well known and some not so well known, were quoted or referred to by parliamentarians during their debates: Benjamin Disraeli, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Campbell, the Emperor of France's book *Life of Julius Caesar*, Lord Byron, Charles Dickens, Alexander Pope, Lord Tennyson, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gay, George Herbert, John Dryden, Aaron Hill, William Wordsworth, Oliver Goldsmith, William Collins, and James Graham. Quotations from such varied sources indicate that parliamentarians read a great deal of literature and were impressed enough by those works to be able to quote or misquote from them.

Another form of literature, history, was used by parliamentarians to help them make their points during debates. For example, the Earl of Carnarvon quoted "the calmest and most philosophic of modern historians," Lord Macaulay, in reference to the British North American Bill. Macaulay also was quoted by Robert Lowe, M. P. from Calne, and by David Pugh, M. P. from Carmarthenshire, in reference to the Mutiny Bill, as well as by the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, M. P. from Merthyr Tydvil, in the debate upon the Education of the Poor Bill. Finally, in the debate on parliamentary reform in the House of Lords, Earl Beauchamp quoted Henry Hallam, "whose opinions as a political writer were always viewed with respect."
All of these literary references in 1867 indicate that parliamentarians read and were influenced by literature. In this study, literature was examined which those same parliamentarians were likely to have read, and some conclusions, as readers from a different time, may be made concerning the society from which that literature came. The reader's first impression must be one of a society in which different interests clashed continually, as in the battle over reform. The humanitarian interest of that society was guarded by *The Times* whose journalists fluctuated in their desire for reform. The realists of the *Quarterly Review* wanted nothing to do with abstract principles and adamantly opposed hasty parliamentary action. They wanted to know what the practical effect of the inclusion of the worker into the representative system would be, and feared that the constitution would not be improved if too many workers were given the right to vote and, consequently, the power to rule by virtue of their numbers. The Conservative party expressed its views through *Blackwood's* wherein enfranchisement of the respectable portion of working men was advocated until party politics necessitated the inclusion of all workers. The upper-class Liberals and middle-class philosophical radicals were consistent in their faith in the individual and the individual's right to take part in the government. Finally, the moralists saw only the gains to be made by viewing the nation as a homogeneous whole.

Such varied interests probably kept earlier proposals for reform from being accepted. Proposals for reform prior to 1867 are not, however, the subject of this paper. This study is concerned with the Second Reform Bill of 1867 and, while historiography has presented a
number of valid reasons as to why the bill was passed, it is my belief that something is lacking in their explanations. The various interests present in Victorian society hardly warrant historians' expressions of inevitability regarding the passage of the Second Reform Bill, especially in a society noted for its rules of strict propriety and moderation.

A society consisting of various and clashing interests, however, is not particularly new. What is remarkable is the similarity of its views in regard to the worker. The humanitarians as represented by The Times, the political factions as represented by three periodicals, and the moralists as represented by the novelists and historians were consistent in their view of the worker as a respectable person who deserved their trust and an innocent and naive victim of circumstance who needed their guidance. Only the realists in the Quarterly Review cautioned that a danger existed in allowing the worker to take part in the government, and that conservative stance was attacked by their kinsman and spokesman for the Conservative party, Blackwood's, as an old-fashioned view which endangered the progress of the country. Such views, as expressed by literature which subtly indicated that the worker was improving, are valuable in assessing their importance to the Victorian reader.

The parliamentarian read this literature, quoted from it, and contributed to it. It is not inconceivable, then, that this literature influenced the parliamentarians in their decision to enfranchise part of the working class. In doing so, they were motivated not only by political reasons but by a principle which served as a basis for their actions. That principle consisted of a workingman in need of guidance
and deserving of trust; it consisted of a subordination of clashing interests to the harmony of the nation and English people as a whole. That principle makes the parliamentarians' passage of the Second Reform Bill of 1867 appropriate and reasonable.
CHAPTER 5 ENDNOTES

1Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 3rd series, 185(1867):1444.

2Ibid., p. 1555.

3Ibid., p. 1705.

4Ibid., 186(1867):1359.

5Ibid., p. 1584.

6Ibid., 187(1867):276.

7Ibid., (Lords), pp. 377-378.

8Ibid., (Commons), p. 937.

9Ibid., 188(1867):1333.

10Ibid., (Lords), p. 1927.

11Ibid., (Commons), 189(1867):1292.

12Ibid., 185(1867):1953.

13Ibid., 186(1867):99.

14Ibid., p. 603.

15Ibid., p. 1746.

16Ibid., 188(1867):230.

17Ibid., 185(1867):242.

18Ibid., 187(1867):1162.

19Ibid., 185(1867):1124.

20Ibid., p. 1601.

21Ibid., 186(1867):641.

22Ibid., p. 924.
23 Ibid., p. 1216.
24 Ibid., p. 1639.
26 Ibid., p. 830.
27 Ibid., p. 1615.
28 Ibid., 188(1867):30.
29 Ibid., p. 105.
31 Ibid., p. 1849.
32 Ibid., P. 1956.
33 Ibid., p. 2018.
34 Ibid., pp. 2027-2028
35 Ibid., (Commons), 189(1867):1178.
36 Ibid., (Lords), 185(1867):572-573.
37 Ibid., (Commons), P. 1359.
38 Ibid., 186(1867):925.
39 Ibid., 188(1867):1340.
40 Ibid., (Lords), p. 1848.
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