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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SEVERAL  
RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND SANITARY REFORM WRITINGS  
OF THE REVEREND CHARLES KINGSLEY

ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this study to analyze a number of the major works of the Reverend Charles Kingsley in relation to the religious, social, and sanitary reform efforts carried on by Kingsley from the pulpit, parsonage, and public platform--in the streets, alleys, and the sick rooms of his parishioners.

The novels Yeast, Two Years Ago, and Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet are dealt with primarily as didactic literature, and secondly as literature encompassing socio-economic and sanitary problems. The Sanitary and Social Lectures and Essays tend to contrast with the novels as completely practical, utilitarian propaganda devices most apropos in a speaking situation. The lectures were most effectively used when Kingsley spoke as an educator at social and sanitary reform workshops.

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OF THE REVEREND CHARLES KINGSLEY

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A THESIS  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate College  
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by  
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## INTRODUCTION

With the climax of the great failure of the Chartist meeting at Kennington Commons, April 10, 1848, the Reverend Charles Kingsley became seriously interested in openly advocating the cause of the workingman.<sup>1</sup> Having posted a sign at Kennington Commons under the anonymous name of Parson Lot, Kingsley expressed sympathy with the desires of the common workers for suffrage, more healthy conditions, and education for children of the lower social orders.<sup>2</sup> The abiding impression of this placard is that of Kingsley's doubt as to the efficacy of the Charter itself, an idea evidenced in many places throughout Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, and especially evident in chapter thirty-three, "A Patriot's Reward," and in chapter thirty-four, "The Tenth of April."<sup>3</sup>

In the three novels to be discussed it seems obvious that Kingsley was somewhat of a literary intellect, but, to the contrary, he spent most of his life as a hard working parson at Eversley parish, keeping down the number

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life (London: Henry S. King and Company, 1877), I, 154-155.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-157.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1911), pp. 239-255.

of gin shops, organizing and regulating charities, and improving the most simple sanitary conditions.<sup>4</sup> Scientific application of sanitation principles to local situations was the goal which the Reverend Kingsley sought after most in his sanitary and social writings. Complex governmental investigations of the sanitary conditions were the last things needed in the immediate approach to the practical problems of sanitary reform. Utilitarian methods were all Kingsley knew of scientific sanitation, and it is this simple approach, augmented by Kingsley's arousal of public awareness of the fact of unhealthy conditions, that was the heart of Kingsley's social and sanitary reform publications.<sup>5</sup> As a theologian, the Reverend Kingsley has been referred to as "wholesome and beneficial,"<sup>6</sup> but Kingsley was no great theologian, as is evidenced by his complete lack of defensive tactics regarding supposedly evil doctrinal positions which Luke voiced as a convert to Roman Catholicism in Yeast.

When the religious doctrine of sin or evil is applied to social, sanitary, and religious problems of the common people, Yeast and Alton Locke testify to the fact that

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<sup>4</sup>Henry James Jr., "Review of Letters and Memoirs," The Nation, XXIV (January 25, 1877), 60.

<sup>5</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1924), pp. 114-115.

<sup>6</sup>John Dyer, "Charles Kingsley, Parson, Poet, and Politician," The Penn Monthly, VI (March, 1857), 200.

Kingsley did not believe in the existence of evil (sin) as such; evil was nothing more than the resistance of man to the harmonious natural laws of the universe.<sup>7</sup> Popular clerical assumption that the punishment of "sinful" man is found in the forms of physical illness, social and religious inequities is a false superstition because the previously mentioned problems are due to the disharmony man himself causes in his own body and in nature when he jumps out of gear with the supremely ordered system laid down in the laws of God's natural, physical universe.<sup>8</sup> Social and sanitary afflictions of the lower orders are not caused by man's spiritual disloyalty to God or by disobedience of doctrinal precepts often alluded to as the chief cause of man's social predicament by many clergymen.<sup>9</sup> Two Years Ago further clarifies the fact that social and sanitary reform of physical conditions is the direct result of the social context in which the physical conditions are found, and cannot be divided whimsically by ministers into secular or clerical problems.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, II, 28.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., I, 415.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER ONE

### YEAST

Probably the three most important elements in Kingsley's didactic approach to the novel are the discussion of social inequities, religious inadequacies, and the mixing in of poetic passages of nature imagery in the prose text of Yeast. This earliest serialized writing is very difficult to channel into one particular area of literary endeavor, such as a novel, pamphlet, sermon, or socio-political treatise.<sup>1</sup> Consideration must be given to all three elements in this sketchy, incongruous piece of writing, but continuity of discussion in dialogue and character study cannot arise out of an analytical discussion of Yeast as good literature--literature relevant to public interest or scholarly endeavor in present times.

It is said that Yeast was inspired by Sartor Resartus, but the format, plot, and characters are entirely of Charles Kingsley's own imagination.<sup>2</sup> Pure objective analysis of the composition of the selection yields a massive current of political, social, and religious ideals and ideas expressed in an indignant, hasty, disordered and

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<sup>1</sup>F. Harrison, "Charles Kingsley's Place in Literature," Forum, XIX (July, 1895), 567.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 570.

passionate manner.<sup>3</sup> Contemporaneousness of the social evils considered makes the present status of the work ephemeral, almost non-relevant, yet the sincerity of intent and the accuracy of description are exquisite extant instances of Kingsley's work as a novelist--if one wants to be loose about the use of the term "novel." Closer examination of the text of Yeast reveals the serialized format of sketches later tied together, but first published separately in Fraser's Magazine in 1848.<sup>4</sup>

Kaufmann suggests that the effect of pressure and hurried creation of the serialized version adequately fits the mood of the population, and that the series was published at the most opportune moment, especially since the didactic portions were administered in smaller portions in Yeast than in most similar writings of economic and ecclesiastic controversies in the 19th century English scene.<sup>5</sup> Kingsley never intended the compiled version to remain unrevised, for he wrote much of it sporadically, and late at night, and later in interviews indicated that

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley E. Baldwin, Charles Kingsley (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1934), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer (London: Methuen and Company, 1892), p. 83.

the best possible procedure would have been to lay the compiled serialized version aside for awhile for further consideration and renovation.<sup>6</sup> Geographically speaking, the novel concerns the southern agricultural districts of the English nation, and the conditions therein in the 1840's. Many questions are raised in the conditions portrayed by Kingsley, who had a complete and concrete knowledge of the position of the agricultural laborer of the times.<sup>7</sup>

Assuredly the novel touches upon the moral, physical, social, and intellectual facets of human individuals caught up in a socio-economic context not favorable to the development of man to his highest possible physical and intellectual capacities. Life, morals, and physical living conditions of the lower class agricultural poor were of prime concern to Kingsley, and despite the didacticism and cynicism found in Yeast, Kingsley's intent was the arousal of interest and concern in the improvement of the physical existence of the agricultural laborers, as well as the removal of the insurmountable barriers to their crossing social class lines.<sup>8</sup> In his "Preface to the First Edition," Kingsley himself states that the purpose of his social work is to

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Stanley E. Baldwin, Charles Kingsley, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Kingsley, Yeast (London: Macmillan and Company, 1884), p. x.

bring about the realization and awareness of the upper classes of the physical, social, and religious conditions of the farm laborers in southern England.<sup>9</sup> The "Preface to the First Edition" indicates the concern Kingsley felt as a social reformer and clergyman over the variety of extremes in social conduct prevalent in the views of young people in his day:

But for the time being, the young men and women of our day are fast parting from their parents and each other; the more thoughtful are wandering either towards Rome, towards sheer materialism, or towards an unChristian and unphilosophical spiritualism. Epicureanism, in my eyes, is the worst evil spirit of the three, precisely because it looks at first sight like an angel of light.<sup>10</sup>

Epicureanism as a way of life is then an extreme which Kingsley does not attempt to suggest as a goal for the common agricultural laborers, but at the same time the social, religious, and sanitary facts of everyday life demand some alleviation of the physical, temporal problems together with increased Christian spiritual growth. Kingsley feels this practical approach goes a long way in dispelling the cynical attitude so prevalent among the more intelligent laborers and younger intellects in the 1840's and 1850's. Novel treatment of all these problems enumerated is not claimed in the "Preface to the First Edition," for the problems

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. x, xi.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. xxii.

enumerated are not new to Kingsley, nor are the doubts expressed over the then contemporary religious ineffectiveness of the Established Church among the lower classes; rather Yeast is an attempt at communication in the no-man's land between the social class lines of the working poor and the affluent aristocracy.<sup>11</sup>

The plot of Yeast is at best unrelated episodes, introducing the reader in the first chapter to an extremely fine description of the fox hunt and natural beauties which are such an inherent part of the hunt itself:

The edge of the great fox-cover; a flat wilderness of low, leafless oaks fortified by a long, dreary, thorn-capped clay ditch, with sour red water oozing out at every yard; a broken gate leading into a straight wood-ride, ragged with dead grasses and black with fallen leaves, the centre mashed into a quagmire by innumerable horse-hoofs; some forty red coats and some four black; a sprinkling of young farmers, resplendent in gold buttons and green; a pair of sleek drab stable-keepers, showing off horses for sale; the surgeon of the union, in Mackintosh and antigropelos, two holiday schoolboys with trousers strapped down to bursting point, like a penny steamer's safety valve; a midshipman, the only merry one in the field, bumping about on a fretting, sweating hack, with its nose a foot above its ears....<sup>12</sup>

Continuity of the novel's plot and didactic purpose is set aside during the thrilling fox hunt in which

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<sup>11</sup>Dame Una Birch Pope-Hennessy, Canon Charles Kingsley--A Biography (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. xxiii.

<sup>12</sup>Charles Kingsley, Yeast, p. 1.

Lancelot Smith, a wealthy young sportsman, is injured and later nursed back to health by Argemone, a squire's daughter. Love scenes of Lancelot Smith and Argemone conveniently intervene between the preaching on social conditions and evils of Roman Catholicism throughout the novel. Although fascinated with each other's extreme differences, Lancelot and Argemone have a problem of communication regarding their views on the purpose of life, and particularly on the value of formalized, high church religion in the Church of England.<sup>13</sup> To say Argemone is a Tractarian at heart and a churchy dogmatist is certainly an accurate analysis. These facts stimulate Lancelot to the point of complete frustration over Argemone's unbelief in the innate capacity in man to cope with life and in the concept of God as being most directly evident in nature. Lancelot feels reception of new ideas in religion or social welfare must not be doomed simply because of newness:

Men are all conservatives; everything new is impious, till we get accustomed to it; and if it fails, the mob piously discovers a divine vengeance in the mischance.<sup>14</sup>

Periodic paintings of the natural beauty of the rural atmosphere, blighted with the effects of disease and illness, occur constantly in the dialogue of Yeast. Description of the chalk rivers is uniquely and skillfully

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-25.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

tied to the sanitation problem so real on the rural estates:

...the perfect limpidity of the water, the gay and luxuriant vegetation of the banks and ditches, the masses of noble wood embosoming the villages, the unique beauty of the water meadows, living sheets of emerald and silver, tinkling and sparkling cool under the fiercest sun, brilliant under the blackest clouds--- there, if anywhere, one would have expected to find Arcadia among fertility, loveliness, industry, and wealth. But alas for the sad reality! The cool breath of those glittering water-meadows too often floats laden with poisonous miasma.<sup>15</sup>

Physical conditions, then, constitute much of the problem of the agricultural poor, and are very infrequently brought to the attention of the nonchalant landowners because the little attention given to the needs of the rural populace is in almost any estimate dependent upon the good relationship maintained with the squire landowner. The latter was almost entirely responsible for providing funds to educate, clothe, and house the agricultural laborers.<sup>16</sup> Anxiety due to the crushing effect which the rent fees and personal debts had on the individual laborers depressed even the most hearty and cheerful individuals. Want and oppression were depicted as companions to the agricultural laborer, continually in his mind, so that existence day by day became the only acceptable reality for the individual.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 36

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

As a counterpart to the serious didactic agricultural portions we have the "letters to Luke," the Tractarian cousin of Lancelot Smith, who is shown in the earlier portions as a poor soul floundering in ascetic doldrums, and in later episodes as a convert to Roman Catholicism. Lancelot becomes angry with the practice of Luke to criticize the humanity in man--the fleshly aspects of individuality which feed man's desire for his own will vs. Divine Will. Lancelot is manly, like Kingsley, and Luke symbolizes the unmanliness of piety as a goal attained by means of ascetic existence found in the Roman Church's theology and religious orders.

The religious world of Luke seems to Lancelot to be very far from the world of individual existence in nature. Commerce and business deal with all sectors of humanity, if they wish to exist, while the church and her clergy ride through life first class for fear of meeting impious people.<sup>17</sup> The Anglican prayer book does not fit the purposed devotion of the country laborer because he does not understand the language of the high church Establishment. To make an idol of a religious document (as had become the habit) pre-supposes that man is made to order for religion, rather than religion suiting the particular follies and weaknesses of very human beings. In short, Kingsley will

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

not subject the universal priesthood of believers unquestioningly to the so-called divinely commissioned clergy.<sup>18</sup>

The heavens and the earth show forth the glories of God, while a purposely naive clergy and inadequate Liturgy and Articles of Confession limit the sense of meaning of the Gospel and the scope of the real concept of a Christian Church. Lancelot was most willing "...to hear the Church of the nineteenth century, and no other; and should be most happy to listen to her, as soon as she had made up her mind what to say."<sup>19</sup>

The rural branch of the Anglican Church is deemed a cold abstraction, while man is depicted as needing a living, evolving guidance relevant to erring human beings, not smooth respectabilities of no real meaning and void of sincerity of purpose. Reception of such advice on the part of Lancelot will at least make the present acceptable for the agricultural laborer in that it will be bearable. Discovery of the existence of a future for Lancelot (by Lancelot) necessitates ending the vices of the lower classes, poor sanitation, blandness of menial existence, and the absence of any real opportunity for educational attainment.<sup>20</sup> Luke hears the voice of the Roman Catholic Church giving him

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

authority and a commission to regenerate the world, a world which has rebelled against its Maker and its nourishing, universal Mother, the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>21</sup> Infallibility becomes the exclusive right of the Roman Church in that her systematic definitions indicate what the good life is to be. This system of canon law is to Luke the life line between the objective reality of everyday life and the Christian concept of a heaven after physical death likened unto the Elysian Fields.

Lancelot Smith sees the theological terminology of his cousin Luke as nothing more than malicious sophistry, while the relics, images, and saints are considered superstitious shams built upon psychotic terror imagery: "...if there be a God, these trees and stones, these beasts and birds must be His will, whatever else is not."<sup>22</sup> Thus the Reverend Kingsley links the scientific conquest of nature by man as an integral part of the kingdom of God on earth with the real communion of saints, the Church. The Church must be, therefore, in harmony with the system of Natural Laws which are given from God, as well as the body of newly discovered physical laws as they are revealed to mankind concerning God's universe. Because of this view of the actual dynamics of Christian theology

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

Kingsley can say: "So give me the political economist, the sanitary reformer, the engineer; and take your saints and virgins, relics and miracles."<sup>23</sup> It is then only a step further to say that scientific utility and the practical power of sanitation reform contain divine germs in even their lowest applications. Therefore, the real enemies of English Catholic Christianity are physical disease and ignorance of the prevention of disease.<sup>24</sup>

This approach to the heavenly purpose of nature and the usefulness of the facts of science is not incongruous with a belief that Christianity is the Gospel of Christ as contained in the Beatitudes of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and only this much is deemed necessary as a prerequisite for admission to the Christian paradise.<sup>25</sup> Carlyle's statement that man had forgotten God is certainly comparable to Kingsley's view of the 19th century Anglican churchmen, for if one accepts the premise that Christ's message as God was simply one of Christian love for all men, then Christianity is primarily a trust in the purposes of the Divine Being as a benevolent father.<sup>26</sup> Kingsley wished to

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>24</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 415.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 416-417.

emphasize Jesus' teaching of the love of one's fellow man found in the Christian Scriptures and applied to the physical needs of all men--in essence a philosophical and political innovation called Christian Socialism.<sup>27</sup>

The application of Christian brotherhood (love) comes to be questioned in the plot when the reader views the poaching incident that culminates in the death of old Harry Verney, gamekeeper for Squire Lavington, Argemone's cantankerous father. Argemone poses the question of whether the system of gamekeeping must be perpetuated at the sacrifice of human life. The reader must judge for himself whether there is any validity in the existence of game reserves for the landowner's pleasure in the same land where the poor find it necessary to steal from these reserves, and even kill the gamekeeper, to keep body and soul together.

Another younger gamekeeper, Tregarva, is also quite a bit of a poet in his spare time. A copy of one of his ballads, "A Rough Rhyme on a Rough Matter," finds its way into Squire Lavington's fly book due to the machinations of Tregarva's rival and enemy. Several of the verses were sufficient ammunition to throw the indignant old squire into a fit of apoplexy, and therefore warrant reiteration:

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<sup>27</sup>Charles Kingsley, Yeast, pp. 129-130.

. . .

I am long past wailing and whining--  
I have wept too much in my life:  
I've had twenty years of pining  
As an English labourer's wife.

A labourer in Christian England,  
Where they cant of a Savior's name,  
And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's  
For a few more braces of game.

You have sold the labouring man, squire,  
Body and soul to shame,  
To pay for your seat in the House squire,  
And to pay for the feed of your game.<sup>28</sup>

. . .

After such an exchange of ideas, Tregarva wisely decides to leave the squire's house, for he had pleaded the cause of the agricultural laborer in his poem, a cause which Argemone felt revealed the perfection of virtue in a gentleman.<sup>29</sup> Honoria, Lavington's other daughter, took a less charitable view of the gamekeeper's opinions, and she was joined in real life by the gentry for whom Kingsley had actually written the verses in an issue of Fraser's Magazine.<sup>30</sup> Parker, editor of Fraser's Magazine, asked Kingsley to shorten any contemplated additions of the book in serialization because of the ballad's adverse effect

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>30</sup>Dame Una Birch Pope-Hennessy, Canon Charles Kingsley-- A Biography, p. 68.

on the circulation of the periodical among the landed class.<sup>31</sup>

The noblesse oblige which prompted the youthful Lancelot to develop a friendly relationship with a common gamekeeper, Tregarva, affects the future conduct of Lancelot Smith in a very significant manner. Tregarva becomes the expert guide on the tour of the village fair, which Lancelot must attend in frock in order not to be recognized as a member of the upper class. Kingsley tilts at the landed aristocracy skillfully, but gently, when he portrays Lancelot decked out in a velveteen shooting jacket, a pair of corduroy trousers, and a waistcoat covered with flowers, walking along the road, and keeping his hands in his pockets as much as possible, "lest their delicacy, which was as it happened, not very remarkable, might betray him."<sup>32</sup>

At the fair Lancelot is brought to the realization that early marriage for the stylish, ruddy-cheeked young countrymen only results in ruination of their healthy appearances early in adulthood. With less food for themselves because of the addition of a family, the young, beaming faces become the anxiety-ridden visages of the older members of the rural community. The earlier the marriage, the greater the social and intellectual disintegration.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Charles Kingsley, Yeast, p. 194.

Having ceased formal schooling at circa eleven years old, the common country boys know little else but ploughing the furrows and earning their bread by the sweat of their brows. Proper nourishment is not even desired at a day's end because of physical exhaustion, resulting in an attitude of fierce brutality and reckless abandon among the agricultural poor when they consider any responsibility for their own future. For moonlighting education in an informal manner Kingsley had this to say:

...did you ever do a good day's farm work in your life? If you had, man or boy, you wouldn't have been game for much reading when you got home; you'd do just what these poor fellows do, --tumble into bed at eight o'clock hardly waiting to take your clothes off, knowing that you must turn up again at five o'clock the next morning to get a breakfast of bread, and perhaps a dab of the squire's drippings, and then back to work again: and so on, day after day.<sup>33</sup>

Certainly Charles Kingsley's description of life as a lower class agricultural laborer is one of heavy manual labor, for farm life is pictured as severe, incessant work, with little entertainment or pleasures, a life hardly encouraging to hopeful social advancement, if the agricultural laborer wished to improve his social position. Mercy and justice are terms which have no meaning for the agricultural poor; saving money for the future is strictly out of the question when wages are hardly enough to consider life in

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

the present, a day to day proposition.<sup>34</sup>

Kingsley attempts to point out the rottenness of a selfish aristocracy in the play by play description of the futility of raising the status of the agricultural population in keeping with modern requirements and aspirations growing out of the most contemporary ideas.<sup>35</sup> Noblesse oblige was almost nonexistent in the landowning class in the 1830's and 1840's, and yet the author is striving to do more than reiterate the aristocratic responsibilities inherently a part of wealthy position. Kingsley pleads additionally for renewal, for re-dedication of purpose in an age of ignoble money hoarding and self-gratification.<sup>36</sup> It is modern society which must implement Kingsley's ideal of the feudal relationship of the nobility guiding the laborers to successful agricultural production. The predominant effect in the descriptive portions of the village carnival is one of waste of human life and talent.<sup>37</sup> Countering the horrible socio-economic conditions by means of a Poor Law is described from Kingsley's point of view as an ingenious means of keeping the poor man a slave and beggar because of the Poor Law's very nature as a dole:

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<sup>34</sup> Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, p. 94.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 96

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 94; R. J. Fyfe, "Review of Yeast," The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and

But don't you see sir, how all poor-laws, old or new either, suck the independent spirit out of man; how they make the poor wretch reckless; how they tempt him to spend every farthing in amusement?<sup>38</sup>

Foremost in the mind of Charles Kingsley is the concept that the working man and the agricultural laborer are unsatisfied by the prospect of increased salary alone-- what they really want is equality of opportunity under the law of the land. With the discussion of such topics among the working men as rent, taxes, and freedom of action comes the necessity for a solution of the socio-economic problems through private individual action and management on the part of the landed aristocracy.<sup>39</sup> Previous parliamentary red tape and ineffective legislation proved to Kingsley that the Charter was not the answer.<sup>40</sup> The Charter was to Kingsley nothing more than promised salvation of the common man from his social position by mere petitioning of parliamentary action. Private individual action on the part of all Englishmen, but especially the landed aristocracy, yields evidence of more tangible social class improvement, because democratic action in a context of equality on a local, individual level is most effective when dealing with

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Science, III (May, 1851), 197.

<sup>39</sup> Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, p. 108.

<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 156-157, 163.

the uneducated masses.<sup>41</sup> Individual personal action is almost invariably followed by successful physical improvements, which prove to the common people that they too have a power of determining their own social destiny; they possess in actuality what they have been theoretically guaranteed in English law as a birth right--equality of justice with all men. At the same time, education of the common people (by the aristocracy) conditions a democratic awareness and concern for individual improvement in the common man, which must be realized before anything else in the individual initiative approach to social class improvements.<sup>42</sup>

Charles Kingsley wished to see a revolution in the whole industrial system of 19th century England that would remove the power of capital over labor and make the working man able to stand upon his own feet as a self-respecting citizen responsible to himself for his own well-being and to the future generations of his nation.<sup>43</sup> Annual parliaments and universal suffrage might have been on the agenda at Kennington Commons in 1848, but Chartism without the Gospel of Christ was strictly out of the question for Kingsley as

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<sup>41</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1924), p. 17.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>43</sup>John Dyer, "Charles Kingsley, Parson, Poet, and Politician," The Penn Monthly, VI (March, 1857), 199.

well as most members of the group known as Christian Chartists.<sup>44</sup> If society (as well as uncivilized mankind) is to be considered "not as a herd, but as a living tree, an organic individual body, a holy brotherhood, and kingdom of God,"<sup>45</sup> then wealth and temporal possessions can only be of use in a context of Christian charity. Charity here is to be interpreted in its original meaning of love, not the perverted sense of alms-giving prevalent in the use of the word today. This type of Christian faith requires a living Christ willing to visit a farmer's home, not a dying Christ on a wooden cross, in spite of the fact that the latter picture is a beautifully noble Christian thought. Christ's humanity is what is important for man to see in his mind's eye; it is not necessary to emphasize Christ's human form on the cross dying for the sins of mankind.

Yet the criticism of asceticism does not end with the rejection of the popular Roman Catholic image of Christ previously mentioned, for it is additionally made clear that the solution of what is to be done about English society does not lie in Roman Catholicism's relics, saints, or Mary, Virgin Mother, Immaculate, and all-loving.<sup>46</sup> Kingsley's

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Charles Kingsley, Yeast, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

criticism of Roman Catholicism can be seen throughout the entire novel, but it is most skillfully displayed without redundancy in a particular exchange between Lancelot Smith and the priest who converted his cousin Luke to Roman Catholicism.<sup>47</sup> In this dialogue Lancelot Smith throws aside any ascetic enjoyment of a weak, crucified Christ dying on the cross, and replaces this Roman Catholic pseudo-Christ with a living, virile Lord who rules fallible men--men who sense nature as the primary, directly visible manifestation of God as a concept of being and as proof of the validity of the existence of a catholic, Christian Church. It is absolutely necessary to see Christ as the flesh and blood God-man, who lived in the earthly reality of nature, and accept just this much, before attempting to propagate the supposedly more important charismatic powers of the Established Church as other (only equally) important signs on the path toward eternal, individual salvation in the Christian paradise.<sup>48</sup>

The plot of Yeast becomes increasingly hazy as Kingsley continues to enumerate a series of problems of English society, to which the author finds no satisfactory

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-241.

<sup>48</sup> Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 285-287.

solution other than the renouncing of temporal aims as goals or as an end in themselves for man's life here on earth.<sup>49</sup>

A philosophical idealism takes control of the plot, with an additional sense of urgency of acceptance thrown at the reader, who must now somehow assimilate the specific instances portrayed in the novel into a world problem, while at the same time subordinating man's personal destiny to a sort of peace of mind which passes all understanding.<sup>50</sup> Man must first build himself into the living temple of the kingdom of Christ on earth and become a part of the invisible priesthood of believers. Emptying oneself of vanity, avarice, and superstition (which are visible manifestations of a corrupt temporal society) to become part of the great Whole is necessary for an understanding of the conclusion of the novel as well as a preparation of Lancelot Smith for the prophet, Barnakill.

To see the kingdom of God realized upon earth requires a certain yielding to the common humility of all men as of the same flesh and blood, which realization is fortified by sound mental induction found in the scientific approach to the physical problems of the poor Englishman. Faith in the future individual progress of members of

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<sup>49</sup> Charles Kingsley, Yeast, pp. 70-71.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 308-09.

mankind is a necessity and obligation for all men if one realizes that man's flesh and blood as well as human nature are the most directly evident, the most indisputable evidences of a Supreme Cause. Kingsley links inanimate and animate matter with the tangible Force, the monotheistic Being of whom there is no beginning or end. True Christianity requires a balance between the excesses of both dogmatism and worldliness so evident in the two worlds of old and new in the 19th century English social scene.<sup>51</sup> Criticism by Kingsley as a writer of the negative aspects of the Established Church in league with the government in a sinister and unChristian way has been voluminous and consistent, but it must be remembered that the temporal English state and the Anglican Church were closely related in the 19th century; thus to insinuate that the Established Church and the state conspired occasionally together in solutions to social problems, which solutions were mutually beneficial and selfishly unChristian, is quite realistic.<sup>52</sup> Kingsley's unannounced goal in Yeast is a realization of a common ground of communication between the English clergy and the common man. It must be realized that the charge

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<sup>51</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot, pp. 9-10.

<sup>52</sup>R. A. Fyfe, "Yeast," The New Englander, X (1852), 179.

against Kingsley by certain clerics that, in effect, he was disloyal as a minister and a false Christian contending for a political religion and an earthly good time coming for the common man<sup>53</sup> is no answer to the solid, logical presentation of social questions which Kingsley developed in Yeast. Surely English society was in a yeasty state of mind regarding religious beliefs and social conditions when the novel was composed in the 1840's, so that calling the English system of economy in the 19th century a system of oppression is not merely caprice on the part of Kingsley, but is based upon real grievances.<sup>54</sup> Doctrinal skepticism is not the abiding impression that the reader is left with; rather Yeast must be remembered as a composition of a Church of England clergyman who succeeded in combining the two professions of scientific social worker and preacher in his own parish work with outstanding success.<sup>55</sup> Yeast is entirely original work,<sup>56</sup> and this fact must become increasingly significant when one remembers that Yeast was wholly successful because of the splendid defiance

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 186-188.

<sup>54</sup>Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, p. 83.

<sup>55</sup>John Dyer, "Charles Kingsley, Parson, Poet, and Politician," 83.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 201; F. Harrison, "Charles Kingsley's Place in Literature," 571-572.

of all classical conventions of literature and the ten commandments of upper British society in 1849.<sup>57</sup>

The author of Yeast does not in fact preach a new gospel, nor can he be accused of German metaphysical atheism because he accepted the scientific method with his Christianity.<sup>58</sup> Utilitarian Christianity is portrayed more true to the Original Author's variety in Yeast than in any of Kingsley's other religious writings, for Kingsley consistently points out the failure of formal religion in its appeal to the Word of God as a panacea, the only accurate remedy for physical conditions caused by the social system. Probably the most important point in Kingsley's Christianity to remember is that the so-called charismatic powers of Christ's visible church had been astoundingly ineffective in simply raising the members of the lower classes spiritually and socially. Throwing the Bible at the masses who are intricately involved in the worst portions of education, economic advantage, and social guidance, is proved useless. Democratic education in an approach to individual initiative and social awareness of poor living conditions among the masses of poor will bring about tangible improvements,

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<sup>57</sup>F. Harrison, "Charles Kingsley's Place in Literature," 568.

<sup>58</sup>R. J. Fyfe, "Review of Yeast," 187.

resulting in the individual's pride in his newly improved socio-economic state, which state he earned with guidance from the upper social orders.<sup>59</sup> It must be taken into consideration that the entire attempt of Kingsley in Yeast does indeed deal honestly, effectively, and realistically with the problems of the agricultural laborer; yet the selection is limited to a consideration of the southern farming districts which the author knew as a parson of Eversley and to experiences earlier in his life.<sup>60</sup> It is in Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet that a consideration of the urban situation is effectively taken up by the Reverend Kingsley.

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<sup>59</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot, pp. 23, 112.

<sup>60</sup>Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, p. 94.

message of Alton Locke was to encourage underprivileged people to develop, as Christian individuals, abilities previously latent, while at the same time maintaining loyalty to the social class to which they belong.<sup>7</sup> Much improvement in the general educational and social situation of the lower classes was already taking place in the 1850's, but to prevent popular misunderstanding Kingsley quickly dispelled a formerly prevalent superstition of inherent inferiority in mental capacity among the poor in the social order: "If your friend wishes to see what can be made of the workmen's brains, let him, in God's name, go down to Harold Weald, and there see Mr. Monro--see what he has done with his own national school boys."<sup>8</sup>

With tongue in mouth, many accused Kingsley of completely lacking first-hand knowledge of the conditions among the tailors,<sup>9</sup> claiming Kingsley whacked out a lot of nonsense about the tailoring and slop-selling based upon the "Reports on Labor and the Poor" in the Morning Chronicle.<sup>10</sup> Surely it must be recognized that Kingsley was no tailor; neither was he immune to literally lifting paragraphs of

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. xxii.

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

<sup>9</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," Blackwood's Magazine, LXVIII (November, 1850), 593.

<sup>10</sup>Stanley E. Baldwin, Charles Kingsley, p. 93.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ALTON LOCKE, TAILOR AND POET

Consideration must be given to a letter to Ludlow, found in part in the "Prefatory Memoir" to Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, because the statements therein profoundly affect the correct concept of Kingsley's strategy for the working man of the city:

We must touch the workingman at all his points of interest. First and foremost at association--but also at political rights, as grounded both on the Christian ideal of the Church, and on the historic facts of the Anglo-Saxon race. Then national education, sanitary and dwelling-house reform, the free sale of land, and corresponding reform of the land laws, moral improvement of the family relation, public places of recreation (on which point I am very earnest), and I think a set of hints from history and sayings of great men, of which I have been picking up....<sup>1</sup>

A sense of commitment is clearly evident in the tone of Kingsley's letter and his approach to the question of property rights for the common man. Committing oneself to the aims of social welfare was felt by Kingsley to be similar to engaging the devil in a battle (which in essence is what his approach to social reform consisted of).

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Prefatory Memoir," "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1911), p. xvi.

Meekness in announcing the social evils of the factory system is considered by the Reverend Kingsley as synonymous with cowardice.<sup>2</sup> Hard work and struggle are depicted as necessary to arouse the public awareness of the deplorable urban socio-economic situation if the battle to get mankind out of its social hell is to be won.<sup>3</sup> It is most important to keep in mind at the same time that Kingsley was above all a supporter of the aristocracy and a well-educated member of the clergy,<sup>4</sup> who felt "inspired to write Alton Locke, which has revealed itself to me so rapidly and methodically that I feel it comes down from above, and that only my folly can spoil it, which I pray against daily."<sup>5</sup>

Kingsley feared overkill in his portrayal of social evils in the urban novel, and dreaded that a feeling of bitterness might overtake his explanation of the individuality of Alton Locke as a young man suffering from the routine misery and social discontent characteristic of so very many tailors and other urban workers in the 1850's.<sup>6</sup> In January 1851, Charles Kingsley wrote to a fellow minister that the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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

<sup>4</sup>Henry James Jr., "Review of Letters and Memoirs," 61.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Prefatory Memoir," p. xx.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. xxi.

others' sanitary reports.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Kingsley had a right to make statements about the poor concerning their condition, for as an active preacher, he was intimately associated with poor agricultural workers.<sup>12</sup> As a critic of the urban worker's conditions Kingsley accurately sketches what others have called "a national crime."<sup>13</sup> The Reverend Kingsley was definitely aware of those great social evils of management's domination over labor which still remain today to mock the boasted social and scientific progress of England into the 20th century.<sup>14</sup>

In Alton Locke, the concept of individual equality and opportunity of Christian Socialist action is made manifest in a spiritual equality similar to the Christian concept of a universal priesthood of believers widely familiar to New Testament readers. It is a concept which Kingsley tried to put into action in the framework of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations.<sup>15</sup> To work hard Kingsley considered not only a duty, but a privilege, but to work against hope, to toil under the

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<sup>11</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 593.

<sup>12</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Prefatory Memoir," xxiii.

<sup>13</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 594.

<sup>14</sup>J.M. Sturevant, "Alton Locke," The New Englander, XIII (May, 1855), 162.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Prefatory Memoir," xv.

overwhelming pressures of despair and anxiety, is seen to produce the most miserable feeling that possibly can be conceived. To the elimination of this feeling Kingsley was dedicated, but he himself could not condone the destruction of the class system or the social structure. That there was a cure possible for every social, moral, and physical evil Kingsley considered worse than cowardice to doubt, but the specific instances of social inequities in Alton Locke are not followed up by logical, systematized explanations of either Kingsley's sanitary or his social plans.<sup>16</sup>

Alton Locke is an accurate, representative sampling of the general spirit and social tendencies of the last half of 19th century England.<sup>17</sup> Because of the utilitarian, scientific spirit of Kingsley's social criticism, he creates a novel that bears the appearance of a drama and an epic tale forced to function as an instrument creating for the upper classes social awareness of conditions of the urban laborers. Many writers agree that Alton Locke appeals to the upper classes to become aware that real political power in the cities lay with the people, not with the individual whims of monarchs.<sup>18</sup> This liberal, democratic opinion

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<sup>16</sup>J.M. Sturevant, "Alton Locke," 162-163.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

is combined by Kingsley with his idealistic concept of a harmonious urban society likened unto the kingdom of God on earth, for Charles Kingsley was still a born and bred countryman.<sup>19</sup> In the urban setting he attempts a counterpart to the Arcadian harmony ideally pictured in Yeast. A solution to the poor urban people's problems is not touched upon in Alton Locke, but perhaps this is because Kingsley did not logically see the difficulties such an idealistic approach (as manifest in Christian Socialism) would have on a logical plan of development or procedure of reform.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in considering Alton Locke, one must remember the rural influence of Kingsley's early years, his birth having been on the edge of Dartmoor, moving at six weeks old to Burton-on-Trent, and later spending ten years of his life in the Fenlands.<sup>21</sup> Together with this early rural experience is the rich experience of having lived in London, at St. Luke's, Chelsea, where his father was rector, and where Kingsley as a youth saw the many conditions in the urban metropolis that needed a great deal of change.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Janet E. Courtney, "Charles Kingsley," Fortnightly Review, III (June, 1919), 950.

<sup>20</sup>J.M. Sturevant, "Alton Locke," 174; Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 595.

<sup>21</sup>Janet E. Courtney, "Charles Kingsley," 950.

<sup>22</sup>Stanley E. Baldwin, Charles Kingsley, p. 93.

The plot of Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet is subtitled An Autobiography, but inferences have been made that it is everything from a wild kind of romance to "a barefaced and impudent assumption of a specific character and profession by a person...who knows no more about slop-selling or tailoring than he has learned from certain letters which lately appeared in the columns of the Morning Chronicle."<sup>23</sup>

In the narrative, Alton Locke is the main subject of the novel. The son of poor parents, Alton reveals the story of the failure and despair of a young man living in a shop in London whose garrets reeked with human breath, whose kitchens and other areas stunk from the noisy open sewers.<sup>24</sup> His father had failed in business as a grocer, having imprudently started a small shop without adequate capital in what appears to be an already overcrowded, remote district of London. Alton's father, whom he could not remember, died leaving the family penniless and brokenhearted.<sup>25</sup> The mother was a fanatical Baptist, who regarded this world as nothing other than a place of trials and inevitable sorrows.<sup>26</sup> The widow fought and struggled for what she believed to be right, writing off physical

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<sup>23</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 593.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1911), p. 2.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 13

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

conditions, poverty, and indeed everything else as the will of God, a cross which she, a member called to Election, would have to bear.<sup>27</sup>

Alton Locke describes his own mother as

...moved by rule and method; by God's law, she considered, and that only. She seldom smiled. Her word was absolute. She never commanded twice, without punishing. And yet there were abysses of unspoken tenderness in her, as well as clear, sound womanly sense and insight. But she thought herself as much bound to keep down all tenderness as if she had been some ascetic of the middle ages--so do extremes meet!... She dared not even pray for our conversion, earnestly as she prayed on every other subject. For though the majority of her sect would have done so, her clear, logical sense would yield to no such tender inconsistency.<sup>28</sup>

Mrs. Locke's conversation, however, had its charms, for we find that in a small way she was fond of entertaining ministers of her own persuasion at tea. This practice provided occasions for outbursts of Alton Locke's anger with the clergy at a very early age, when he saw the frequency with which (on the occasions of the visits) the sugar and muffins disappeared from the meager stock with which the family was provided. The mother, however, had a certain additional pride of ancestry, being traditionally descended from a Cambridgeshire Puritan who had somehow turned up in the service of Cromwell. During the long winter evenings this family background provided subject

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-7.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

matter for the mother, who would tell the children lengthy stories about the glorious times when Englishmen rose up to take the crowns from kings and prelates of the Church. Alton Locke does not, however, develop into a religious fanatic; quite to the contrary, he becomes a skeptic about formalized religion: "...our God, or gods, rather, till we were twelve years old, were hell, the rod, the ten commandments, and public opinion."<sup>29</sup>

Alton's paternal uncle had been as fortunate in business as his brother was unlucky, and was now a kind of city magnate, proud of his quickly acquired wealth, but not altogether oblivious of his poorer relatives. The wealthy uncle also had a son similar in age to Alton Locke, who, being the only son, was to be the inheritor of the uncle's wealth, and who, being destined for the church, was undergoing the necessary period of education, or pseudo-education, depending upon how one looks at the education of the clergy in the middle of the 19th century in England. Since the uncle was responsible for the annual allowance (dole) supplied to widow Locke and her son, it was quite natural that Alton's mother should apply to the benevolent man for advice regarding the future of her son, who had already grown to a cadaverous lad of fifteen years old,

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

with a weak constitution and a tendency to write poetry of questionable value.<sup>30</sup>

Alton was introduced to a tailoring establishment at the West End of London by the uncle, who might have done something better for the boy in real life, but who serves Kingsley's purpose by providing the reader with an excellent picture of the tailoring trade in the middle of the nineteenth century:

I stumbled down after Mr. Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase, till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work--perhaps through my life! A low lean-to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet, sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. On the floor, thick with dust, and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and wretchedness, that made me shudder.<sup>31</sup>

This portrayal is intended to give an accurate picture of a respectable London tailoring establishment, where the men received fairly decent wages. Such a shop is called respectable in "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" in distinction from others, infinitely more numerous, that had sprung up all over because of the excesses of the rotten cut-throat competition.<sup>32</sup> It is of the greatest importance

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Prefatory Memoir," p. xlviii.

that no doubt should remain in the reader's mind concerning the accuracy of Charles Kingsley's description of the actual condition of the working class of journeymen tailors in London. Iteration of a short excerpt from "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" concerning the system of sweaters, who were contracted middle men, presents further proof of the actual social context of Alton Locke:

The honourable shops in the West End number only sixty; the dishonourable four hundred and more; while at the East End the dishonourable trade has it all its own way. The honourable part of the trade is declining at the rate of one hundred and fifty journeymen per year; the dishonourable increasing at such a rate that, in twenty years it will have absorbed the whole tailoring trade, which employs upwards of twenty-one thousand men.<sup>33</sup>

Wages at the honorable shops ranged from thirty-six to twenty-four shillings for a piece of work for which the dishonorable shop owners paid twenty-two to nine shillings,<sup>34</sup> but the journeymen tailors in the dishonorable shops did not receive the entire amount last mentioned because the sweaters as middlemen took two-thirds or one-half of the amount for themselves, leaving barely enough for the hard working journeymen to keep body and soul together.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

It must be admitted that many of these sweaters were Jews, who had no scruple of conscience at amassing a considerable fortune in an astoundingly short period of time<sup>36</sup> and doing so at the expense of human lives. The positions of many of the rich London Jewish merchants were procured through bill-broking, sweating, discounting, and other nefarious devices and machinations, not by honest labor and industry.<sup>37</sup> In any event, Alton Locke was left almost speechless with astonishment and overpowered with nausea on his first visit to the sights and odors of the pandemonium of stitching tailors in the smelly garret. All this contrasts uncomfortably with the general material progress of the 19th century English economy, thus forcing admission that personal freedom, health, and physical well-being of the lower classes were in a condition which disgraced the English nation in the 19th century.<sup>38</sup>

Some of Alton Locke's companions are distinctly painted as drunken, lewd, and profane wretches, but there is at least one among them, a certain John Crosswaite, who beneath a stone-like appearance and stunted body conceals a noble heart, strongly in favor and sympathy with the

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<sup>36</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 599.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>J.M. Sturevant, "Alton Locke," 162.

Chartist cause. From Crosswaite Alton Locke learns his first lesson regarding the rights of man, and becomes conscious that society had not very adequately given him his rights. From another character, Sandy Mackaye, an odd little Scotsman who keeps a book stall, Alton receives his first introduction to literature.

Sandy Mackaye is an excellent character sketch--perhaps the very best in the novel, according to Thomas Carlyle, who after reading the first chapters in manuscript claimed Kingsley's literary attempt in Alton Locke "is definable as crude....the impression is a fervid creation left half-chaotic, but Saunders Mackaye is nearly perfect. I greatly wonder how you did contrive to manage him, his very dialect is as if a native had done it."<sup>39</sup> Sandy is a radical, but he is kind and sympathetic, and on the whole a man with a formidable amount of shrewdness and common sense, unlike most all of the apprentice tailors and other characters in the plot. Sandy's age is quite difficult to ascertain, but it is sufficient to state that his purpose as a character is to take a fancy to the young apprentice tailor, Alton Locke, and lend him books. Sandy tutors Alton so successfully in Latin that in three months' time Alton masters Virgil, a task of no small doing for a young tailor, distinctly consumptive, working all day in an

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<sup>39</sup>Anon., "Review of Two Years Ago," Putnam's Monthly Magazine, IX (May, 1857), 93.

unhealthy atmosphere in the tailor's garret.

When Alton proclaims in his mother's presence that he is an unbeliever and potential atheist, he is forced to find shelter under the roof of Sandy Mackaye's house. Alton stiches away until he is almost twenty years old, educating himself in his spare time as best he can, with the aid of Sandy Mackaye, until Alton acquires a certain reputation among his comrade tailors as an uncommonly clever young man. The old book dealer, Sandy, who is mysteriously acquainted with Alton's avaricious uncle, informs the latter that Alton is somewhat of a prodigy, and the uncle condescends to grant Alton an interview. In a not overly generous manner, typical of the usual meaningless philanthropic actions of the upper classes, Uncle hands over five shillings to Alton Locke for spending money, which is a signal for the entrance of Alton's cousin George, who is clean-cut enough, but selfish and egocentric much like other rich boys of his class. George suggests a visit to Dulwich Gallery, just to be friendly, but the trip results in a scene which is a textbook example of Kingsley's portrayal of the condescending attitude of the upper classes toward the proletariat.

In viewing Guido's St. Sebastian, Alton glimpses a beautiful young lady, who is so attracted to the apprentice tailor that she takes the uncommon liberty for her class position to approach Locke in conversation:

A woman's voice close to me, gentle,  
yet of deeper tone than most, woke me  
from my trance.

"You seem to be deeply interested in  
that picture?"

"...It is indeed a wonderful picture,"  
I said timidly. "May I ask what is the  
subject of it?"

"Oh don't you know?" said the young beauty,  
with a smile that thrilled through me.  
"It is 'St. Sebastian.'"

"I am very much ashamed," I answered,  
colouring up; "but I do not know who St.  
Sebastian was. Was he a Popish saint?"<sup>40</sup>

After Lillian's narration of the story of the saint's  
martyrdom, Alton suddenly appears thrilled beyond words and  
seemingly falls in love with the aristocratic young lady.  
George in the mean time, although taking no part in the  
conversation, has likewise fallen in love with the beautiful  
apparition, and after her departure, drives Alton into a  
fit of frustration, jealousy, and indignation by talking  
about the lady rather rapturously, as young passionate men  
are apt to do. Alton sets himself to the task of writing  
poetry, and Lillian, the lady Alton met in the gallery,  
becomes his muse. Sandy Mackaye plays the part of literary  
censor of the poetry, but he expresses no great admiration  
for Alton's early efforts, and recommends that Alton become  
a poet of the common people. In various scenes of wretchedness

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<sup>40</sup> Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, p. 54.

which they visit, Sandy Mackaye illustrates poetic subject matter of purposeful reflection for a young poet such as Alton Locke.<sup>41</sup> Alton then, while still a tailor, becomes a poet, and after two and a half years produces a manuscript volume under the title Songs of the Highways.<sup>42</sup>

Later Alton Locke has opportunity to publish his book of poems on the common people when an old man, Dean Winnstay, agrees to patronize the poems and head a subscription list, provided Alton censors out certain passages which are offensive to upper class taste because they savor of republican principles. Alton, anxious for speedy publishing of the poems, consents to the censorship of the offensive passages. As a result, Miss Stantion (engaged bride-to-be of Lord Lyndale) announces that Alton is obviously weak in principles, a statement which hurts Locke's feelings. Not having completed the subscription list for his publication, Alton returns to London and becomes a member of the staff of the Weekly Warwhoop, a Chartist paper edited by O'Flynn, a radical republican with whom Kingsley apparently has no sympathy as a social reformer.<sup>43</sup> Alton's hack writing job proves to be un-

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

satisfactory because O'Flynn (possibly a caricature of Feargus O'Connor), of doubtful intelligence, has the habit of mutilating Alton's articles by sometimes putting in inserts to adapt the contributions to his own views and purposes.<sup>44</sup> Alton finds it morally uncomfortable to invent outright lies about the Anglican Church and the English universities, as he is asked to do by O'Flynn. Locke begins to suspect that he may have been misled regarding political views, and that it is quite possible for a man to call himself a patriot and still be a lying rabble rouser.

Crosswaite and Mackaye, Alton's peers, are not in any sense remarkably well pleased with Alton's carrying on with the aristocracy to get his poetry approved for publication; neither are they pleased with the censorship of some of the most descriptive but insulting lines of the book of poetry, and suspect that this compromise of censorship by Locke is the first symptom of Alton's regression from the Chartist cause.

Under these circumstances, Alton felt there was nothing for him to do but to redeem himself as a Chartist by some daring deed, which turns out to be participation in a meeting of urban rabble who are denouncing the low rate of

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 148-149.

wages paid by the employers. Arousing himself into a passionate state over the unsuccessful effort to convince the group of social rejects that the Charter was The Way, Alton turns to soap-box oration and captivates the group with a lecture on the rights of the common man--an extremely bad topic, considering the motley group to which Alton was speaking. The stirring sermon of Locke sends the group off to a neighboring house to plunder and burn the estate, which was not exactly what Alton Locke had in mind when he referred to social rights in his speech. After the yeomanry are called out, the mob begins to scatter, but Locke is caught holding the bag when he attempts to rescue a desk of the owner of the estate from the hands of a pilfering farm laborer.

In order not to labor the point, one could say that three years in prison afford ample time for Locke to reflect on the proper approach to social reformation, and supposedly lead to a less radical outlook. The prison chaplain attempts to reclaim any remnants of Christianity left in the young poet-tailor, but proves astoundingly unsuccessful, for Alton deemed himself the intellectual superior of the prison clergyman, a man who knew only dogmatic phraseology and was no practicing Christian doer of the Word.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

On a later occasion Alton Locke encounters the typhoid germ in an escapade at the home of a former worthless acquaintance, Jemmy Downes, and is nursed back to health by his former acquaintance, Eleanor, who turns out to be another Florence Nightingale. The cholera episode described in chapter thirty-five is completely factual, since Kingsley himself visited Bermondsy slum districts in October 1849, where he saw the same water of the common sewer, filled with dead fish, dogs, and cats, being used for drinking purposes.<sup>46</sup> The novel plot itself is nicely concluded with the narration of the journey of Alton Locke to America for rest from his recent bout with typhoid fever, but Alton dies just before landing in the new world, leaving a sort of symbolic message from all tailors in the form of a poem, "My Last Words."<sup>47</sup>

If the principles of 19th century English competition were not unjust, if the wages to labor were not based completely on the tyranny of competition, then quite obviously Alton Locke becomes a meaningless book and an inaccurate representation of labor conditions among the lower classes. Yet the scenes portrayed were acquired from genuine and unquestionable facts.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps it is especially

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<sup>46</sup> Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 216.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, p. 307.

<sup>48</sup> Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 608.

in this strongly pictorial power of Charles Kingsley with the urban conditions that the novel can be considered a treatise on social reform and sanitation for the lower classes. On the other hand, the public success of the selection was strongly due to the fact that Kingsley made a loud enough issue of the right things, in the right place and at the most opportune time.<sup>49</sup> The Jacob's Island-Bermondsey episode, the conditions in the sweaters' dens, the starvation, and the frequency of consumption, when weighed against the fact that despite the moral, social, and intellectual depression (not to mention the physical conditions), many apprentice tailors were forced to return to the sweater's shops after being freed, is evidence enough of the state of the urban proletariat.<sup>50</sup> Thus if the urban situation described by Kingsley is viewed as no great exaggeration, evidence is very strong that the government of the 1850's was at heart basically unconcerned with any socio-economic problems unless they were directly related to the volume of foreign exports of English industrial products.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup>Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, p. 160.

<sup>51</sup>Anon., "Review of Alton Locke," 609-611.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TWO YEARS AGO

The meaning intended by Kingsley in the title Two Years Ago is not particularly revealed or evident to the reader, except for the fact that dating backward from the fall of 1856, when the novel was written, two years would place the reader in the period of the Crimean War and the great cholera epidemic in England.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these subjects, Kingsley dealt with a great variety of topics: the necessity of sanitary reform to prevent the advent of a cholera epidemic, the English clergy vs. sanitary reform, and American slavery.<sup>2</sup> As a novel, the selection is a melange of highly romantic episodes, filled with nature description which Kingsley wrote very simply and plainly, as is well evidenced in the lines concerning Elsley's descent from a mountain range.<sup>3</sup>

It is with this romantic, descriptive nature writing that the novel is permeated, and any strong theme of criticism

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<sup>1</sup>Anon., "Review of Two Years Ago," 506.

<sup>2</sup>W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," The New Englander, XV (August, 1857), 449.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago (London: Macmillan and Company), III, 112.

of the upper class, or polemics on the failures of the upper class, is strictly absent from Two Years Ago.<sup>4</sup> Of slavery Canon Kingsley spoke in no compromising terms, for he made his objections extremely clear in the La Cordifiamma episode.<sup>5</sup> The opening chapters of volume one of Two Years Ago consider the problem of slavery quite simply as morally wrong and unmanly, therefore not noble, brave, and humane as all meaningful human action should be. Kingsley appreciated the uncomfortable position of the southern plantation owners of America, however, for he admitted he himself was of West Indian descent (his grandfather having married a West Indian Heiress).<sup>6</sup> Thus, in a conversation with Ellis Yarnell, Kingsley related the problems of Negro emancipation vs. economic conditions in the Indies--especially in Jamaica--to the fears of the southern American aristocracy in the same situation if emancipation were to occur in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

Strictly against the moral concept of slavery, Kingsley would not at the same time consider himself an outright abolitionist, for he wished to see slavery eliminated

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<sup>4</sup>Anon., "Review of Two Years Ago," 506.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 512.

<sup>6</sup>Ellis Yarnell, "Charles Kingsley: A Reminiscence," Lippincott's Magazine, XVII (March, 1876), 377.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

from the American scene as painlessly and discreetly as possible.<sup>8</sup> Such an approach to slavery would require the use of skilled diplomacy,<sup>9</sup> and it is for this reason that slavery and the other social problems previously mentioned are criticised in Two Years Ago only by members of the educated middle or upper classes. The upper class members in Two Years Ago remind the members of the lower social order of their responsibilities to themselves, the community, and the country in which they live. This is a distinct departure in approach to the injustice of physical conditions among the poor, for in Alton Locke and in Yeast the members of the lower social order themselves reveal to the reader the author's didactic message by means of a narration of evil social conditions. Thus it becomes the noblesse oblige of Thomas Thurnall, Campbell, Headly, and others to guide the poor beast-like country folk in the ways of scientific, experimental approaches to disease and sanitary practices in preparation for the coming cholera epidemic in the Aberalva parish.

In an attempt to convince the town authorities that the increase of cholera cases from two in 1837 to six in 1849 is a matter of grave public concern, Tom Thurnall is

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Anon., "Review of Two Years Ago," 512.

accused of being nothing but a bothersome, interfering troublemaker.<sup>10</sup> Being a scientific man of medicine, Thurnall relates population and the proximity of town buildings directly to the intensity and rapidity of the spread of such epidemic afflictions as cholera, which he indicated would strike Aberalva parish in June and July of 1854.<sup>11</sup> Ignorance, pride, laziness, and superstition affect all the influential citizens (including the town physican, Dr. Heale,) to such a degree that to prove their own individual innocence of following unhealthy sanitary and hygenic procedures, they refuse to admit the evils exist in Aberalva.<sup>12</sup> As a finale, Dr. Heale, a supposedly qualified physician, passes off to Tom Thurnall an outstandingly good display of the popular ignorance prevalent among the leading citizens of Aberalva concerning sanitary science:

And what be you thinking of Sir, to expect me to offend all my best patients? and not one of 'em but rents some two cottages, some a dozen, And what'll they say to me if I go a routing and rookling in their drains like an old sow by the wayside, beside putting 'em to all manner of expense? And all on the chance of this cholera coming, which I have no faith in, nor in this new-fangled sanitary reform neither, which is all a dodge for a lot of young

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago, II, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-67.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-70.

Government puppies to fill their pockets, and rule and ride over us: and 'tis judgment, Sir, a judgment of God, and we can't escape His holy will, and that's the plain truth of it.<sup>13</sup>

Tom Thurnall, who certainly was no orthodox Christian,<sup>14</sup> reminded the old quack that even in Old Testament times God saw fit to cure disease, and if the Bible was accurate evidence, New Testament Christianity, together with scientific sanitation, should be fit subject matter for exposition from the pulpit by the clergymen to make the people aware of the real relationship of sanitation and hygiene to physical disease.<sup>15</sup> Inference that the relationship between sanitation and physical disease is truly valid still stops the Reverend Headly from preaching on such matters from the pulpit because healthful living and sanitation are technically a secular matter; yet the Reverend Kingsley, speaking through Tom Thurnall, says disease kills people, and it is contrary to the commandments of God to be responsible for the death of one's neighbors.<sup>16</sup>

From the pulpit, Kingsley himself stated that the clergy's ignorance of the religious significance of sanitation

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago, II, 71.

<sup>14</sup> W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," 449.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago, II, 73-76.

<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 415.

was an excuse for their denying responsibility in the matter of public welfare, for if the doctrines of the Church of England cannot be made to fit so-called secular matters involving scientific facts relating sanitation and physical disease,<sup>17</sup> then Kingsley suggests the facts must represent themselves openly in the pulpit, without any pretense to direct, doctrinal significance, while at the same time stating that the doctrines should be forced to the background.<sup>18</sup>

The propaganda campaign to arouse the public to the dangers of cholera coming to Aberalva makes little headway, for each person approached by Dr. Thurnall makes an excuse usually based on unconcern, but sometimes clearly a matter of laziness on the part of the nonchalant citizen.<sup>19</sup> More often public apathy may be accounted for in the fact that most citizen landowners of Aberalva refused to bring the criticism of existing sanitary evils out in public meetings because they were by and large guilty of the same infractions as their neighbors, and perhaps to an even greater degree. Sanitary committees organized by Thurnall could not

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<sup>17</sup>W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," 454.

<sup>18</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 416-417.

<sup>19</sup>Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago, II, 79-81.

rely on the power of united action because the landowners and businessmen in the rural districts of Aberalva also often served as money lenders to the agricultural laborers and fishermen of this little coastal town.<sup>20</sup> Kingsley's inference is that offending a guilty squire or businessman with accusations of sanitary violations could cause an end of the needed funds to the lower class workers.

Thurnall's prophecy came true; the cholera epidemic came during June and July, a season of drought in Aberalva, for "Baalzebub is a sunny fiend; and loves not storm and tempest, thunder, and lashing rains; but the broad bright sun, and broad blue sky under which he can take his pastime merrily, and laugh at all the shame and agony below."<sup>21</sup>

Neither youth, money, nor social position affect the random selection of the epidemic as it strikes suddenly and most unexpectedly. Kingsley depicts some citizens of Aberalva as having the eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die attitude during the epidemic, while others such as Reverend Headly, Campbell, Grace, and Dr. Tom Thurnall worked to alleviate the suffering of those stricken by the disease.<sup>22</sup> Of special interest is the attempt of various and sundry clergymen to preach (out of their own innate stupidity) to

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 234-236.

the people that the cholera epidemic was a punishment from God, and that the people should do nothing to alleviate others' sufferings, for God would punish all who interfered with His punishments.<sup>23</sup>

Thus Kingsley is provided with a didactic opportunity to reveal the English clergy's attitude toward scientific social reform as it was in the 1840's and 1850's.<sup>24</sup>

Ministers of the Church of England must be classified into three groups according to the Reverend Kingsley: 1. Those who say the business of the church is strictly spiritual; hence sanitation is beyond the jurisdiction of the Church of England, 2. those who deem sanitary reform a parcel of nonsense; thus shutting their eyes to any consideration of the subject, and finally 3. those timid souls who realize sanitary reform through scientific control is the truthful approach to destruction of disease, but who are afraid to speak out for fear of displeasing the wealthy interests responsible for the clergy's comfortable sustenance.<sup>25</sup>

Probably the third category of preachers is most despicable, for these men realize the direct relationship of sanitation, hygiene, and maintenance of general public

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 239-247.

<sup>24</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, I, 414.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 415-416.

health. Nevertheless, they compromise what is morally right and scientifically sound with their fleshly interests of comfort and security, and arrive at an official position of bland vagueness on the evils of prevalent sanitary conditions or the necessity for scientific cholera control.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the social-religious episodes, the novel deals mainly with the traveling experiences of Tom Thurnall, the ideal man, aware of the parts and whole of a physical world which is beneficent to man, its creation.<sup>27</sup> The world of nature seems to be God extended into a physical reality, inherently containing a balance of right and wrong, but at the same time subject to the scientific laws which may be a part of man's knowledge and control. Two Years Ago does not emphasize the anthropomorphic concept of God already discussed in Yeast and Alton Locke. One cannot, however, say the selection is atheistic, but Pantheistic, for Pantheism suggests that God is a transcendent reality, of which man and nature are the visible manifestations, and the novel is saturated with this type of nature imagery, which is a substitution for conventional religious format.<sup>28</sup> Two Years Ago goes further than considering God to be an

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>27</sup>W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," 452.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 459-461.

idealistic, transcendent abstraction; God is earnest, God is real, yet despite the absence of formalized dogma the approach to problems is Christian and not an encouragement of complete materialism in any sense of the word.<sup>29</sup>

Better than average members of the upper social order are depicted in such men as Lord Scoutbush, a young peer and guardsman, who probably was no intellectual to say the least, but who may be given credit for attempted self-improvement. Others who improve marvelously as human beings include the Reverend Frank Headly, Curate of Aberalva, who before the cholera epidemic of Two Years Ago was attempting to be a priest of God according to what he fancied were the formal, traditional doctrines of the church and the office of the priesthood, rather than dealing with people as an authentic man, close to nature and his fellow man, thus close to God. Perhaps it is the association with Tom Thurnall in the cholera epidemic that brings the latter qualities out of the Reverend Headly, for both men are fanatical in their approach to a philosophy of life.<sup>30</sup>

Frank Headly is almost a religious fanatic regarding the precepts of the church, and Thurnall a skeptic of Christianity, not quite an atheist, but definitely an

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<sup>29</sup>W. G. Sumner, "Two Years Ago," The University Quarterly, IV (October, 1861), 276.

<sup>30</sup>Anon., "Review of Two Years Ago," 509.

unbeliever in respect to the precepts and doctrinal creeds of the Church of England. At the onset of the novel, Thurnall is portrayed as the self-sufficient, ungodly man of adventure,<sup>31</sup> but later, after viewing more of nature, Thurnall has some sort of mystic religious reaffirmation of the existence of God manifested in nature and man, and further displayed in the simple facts of life, death, good health, and physical strength.<sup>32</sup> Of all the aforementioned points, Kingsley would insist that nature and man (as flesh and blood) are the only tangible, acceptable, and comprehensible evidences of a Christian God.<sup>33</sup> Since God is present in these natural manifestations, Christianity must inherently contain the teachings of natural science in health, sanitation, and economic improvement if Christianity truly expresses the purposes of God:

This is very pleasant--to feel surer and surer, day by day, that one is not needed; that science moves forward swift and sure, under a guidance higher than one's own, that the sacred torch-race never stand still, that He has taken the lamp out of old and failing hands, only to put it in young and brave ones, who will not falter till they reach their goal.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," 449.

<sup>32</sup>Stanley E. Baldwin, Charles Kingsley, p. 236.

<sup>33</sup>W. T. Eustis, "Two Years Ago," 454, 458.

<sup>34</sup>Charles Kingsley, Two Years Ago, III, 302.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SANITARY AND SOCIAL LECTURES AND ESSAYS

In addition to Kingsley, other prominent men were involved in the cause of sanitation for public welfare, which resulted in the creation of a Central Board of Health in 1848.<sup>1</sup> Lord Ashley acted as chairman, with Dr. Southwood Smith and the very influential Sir Edwin Chadwick as additional members.<sup>2</sup> Sir Edwin Chadwick was by far the most efficient member of the board in pointing out existing sanitary evils perpetuated by wealthy landlords, and for this reason Chadwick incurred such popular public displeasure that he was removed from office in 1858.<sup>3</sup> Eight years later, in 1866, the functions of the former Central Board of Health were divided between the Privy Council and the Home Office, with Sir John Simon as acting official medical inspector.<sup>4</sup> In the same year, 1866, a new Sanitary Act was passed by the House of Commons, which centralized authority for sanitary administration and supervision of all of England in the government agencies previously mentioned.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moritz Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer (London: Methuen and Company, 1892), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Regarding the intensity and seriousness with which Charles Kingsley intended to pursue sanitary reform, we note in a letter to Lady Harding, date July 22, 1859, several pertinent remarks:

I, am going to throw myself into this movement. I am tired of most things in the world. Of sanitary reform I shall never grow tired. No one can accuse a man of being sentimental over it, or of doing too much for it.

Further evidence indicates that when diphtheria, a relatively new disease in England, reached Eversley parish, Kingsley spent a great deal of time going in and out of the common people's cottages with large bottles filled with an antiseptic for gargling, an act considered by Kingsley as helpful in prevention of oral contact of diphtheria.<sup>7</sup> It is simple, direct association of unhealthy physical conditions with moral and physical degradation that marked Kingsley somewhere around 1857 as in a state of transition from a simple advocate of the rights of the common man to an open advocate of physical improvement of living conditions which had created poor social, sanitary, and moral situations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Mrs. Charles Kingsley, Charles Kingsley--His Letters and Memories of His Life, II, 86.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Kingsley, "The Science of Health," Sanitary and Social Lectures and Essays (London: Macmillan and Company, 1857), p. 45. Subsequent citations will be from this edition.

<sup>8</sup>Mority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, pp. 202-203.

Proof of his position is found in a lecture on "Great Cities and Their Influence for Good and Evil," which points out that the tendency downward in the morals and social attitudes of the working poor must be attributed in great part to the loss of personal, individual respect and initiative.<sup>9</sup> The resultant drunkenness of the members of the lower class is caused in great part by bad air and bad lodging, but when these problems are remedied within the perspective of greater amounts and quality of education, drunkenness will no longer be a problem for the lower classes.<sup>10</sup> Preventing the erection of too many taverns convenient to the working man in the city will result in directly affecting the good health of the common man, who, having no great need or opportunity for drink, will not seize upon the habit so easily.<sup>11</sup> Large cities must create plans whereby they can be gradually depopulated, creating more living space for new public buildings, new warehouses, and resulting in less smoke, human dirt, and filth.<sup>12</sup> Healthy conditions will have a direct effect at once in the saving of the poor rates, extermination of epidemics, and considerable reduction of a host of other non-contagious diseases contracted because of unsanitary, crowded

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<sup>9</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Great Cities and Their Influence for Good and Evil," p. 199.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

conditions.<sup>13</sup> The necessity for such considerable effort in the cities is founded on Kingsley's belief that a divine element exists in each and every one of God's creations.<sup>14</sup> Physical laws are given for man to follow in order that he might live as a divine creature. Breaking physical laws is in part a disobedience of God's laws concerning disease, for assuredly God demands that all men treat themselves as temples of God.<sup>15</sup> Illness, furthermore, must be understood as having physical origin, which fact is to be explained to the masses through instruction in the rudiments of health.<sup>16</sup>

Proper health education must be included in every school curriculum, and instruction begun at an early age.<sup>17</sup> At the time of the lecture on "The Science of Health," Kingsley related that because they were using as small a portion of their body muscles as possible.<sup>18</sup> Physiological functioning is directly related to psychological stability, intelligence, and ability in problem solving. Kingsley strongly implies that physical weakness can become largely

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>14</sup>Janet E. Courtney, "Charles Kingsley," 950.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Great Cities and Their Influence for Good and Evil," p. 222.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Kingsley, "The Science of Health," p. 21.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

a matter of heredity. With larger communities of people there is a greater involvement of physiological degradation, aided by generic inferiority.<sup>19</sup> To a considerable degree, man is still responsible for his own destiny (and that of his children) in the improvement of physical health and social conditions. Moral influence must be exercised by those who know the causes of disease, upon those who live in dirt and drunken degradation. Corpus sanem, mentem sanem should be the motto of social and sanitary reformers.<sup>20</sup> Intellectual weakness follows poor physical health almost invariably.

In the lecture given at the Needlewomen's Institution in 1855, Kingsley pointed out that organized clothing clubs, shoe clubs, and maternity clubs had become machinations taking the form of mere palliatives of the greatest social evil which none of them touch--the lack of a sense of personal responsibility on the part of the lower classes for education and sanitary improvements.<sup>21</sup> Clubs for improving social conditions should not, however, be disbanded, for they do serve, to some extent, to make life more bearable for those

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>21</sup>Charles Kingsley, "One of a Series of 'Lectures to Ladies' given in London at the Needlewomen's Institution," 7-8.

poor people who are unable to alleviate their own suffering.<sup>22</sup> A proper approach on the part of members of the social reform clubs is of highest importance. Contact with individuals who need help must be maintained in an atmosphere of loving, personal human kindness.<sup>23</sup> Instead of reproof and fault finding, the social worker must encourage and praise every effort of the poor person.<sup>24</sup> Humbleness on the part of the social worker in asking a poor member of society how to help, rather than expressing pity over his condition, will go a great deal further in improving the situation of the individual.

To Kingsley, the secret of thrift was knowledge; he related proper knowledge of a subject to reduced work and effort on the part of the individual who was educated. In a lecture on "Thrift" in 1869, he applied this relationship to sanitary practices.<sup>25</sup> Knowledge of simple sanitary principles would save the health and lives of countless individuals. Proof that ignorance caused many of the deaths from illness is found in the fact that most of the deaths which occurred in England in 1869 were caused by unnecessary,

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Thrift," 80.

preventable diseases which attacked children whose parents might have been aware of the symptoms of disease through proper educational procedure.<sup>26</sup> Lack of training through education leads the individual to acceptance of superstitions which the quack and the fanatic enjoy foisting upon ignorant, unscientific people. To Kingsley this evil was perpetuated most often by mothers who did not teach their children that knowledge is the thrift of all parts of life.<sup>27</sup>

In a lecture on ventilation called "Two Breaths," given at Winchester in 1869, Charles Kingsley defined the difference between good air and bad air.<sup>28</sup> Good air was composed of oxygen, nitrogen, and minute portions of carbonic acid, while bad air had all of the first two substances, with far greater amounts of carbonic acid, which poisons the air in a poorly ventilated room.<sup>29</sup> In a well-ventilated room, the bad air with the abundance of carbonic acid must be let out and the good air with a minimum of carbonic acid must be taken in. Kingsley recommended two types of ventilators as economically feasible to do the job in poor households: 1. The Arnott's

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>28</sup>Charles Kingsley, "Two Breaths," 50.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

ventilator, which was to be fixed on the ceiling, and 2. a perforated zinc square over each of the cottage doors, with a perforated sheet in the ceiling of the hall of the cottage to allow foul air to escape from the building itself.<sup>30</sup>

Health itself must be widely promoted by proper exercise, which may be found for young and old in games and sports. To produce these healthy bodies is the aim of all sanitary workers, for without a harmony of grace and proportion in mind and body, an individual is not truly at his best.<sup>31</sup> A suggested time for mind and body divides the day into four hours for each area of development. Recommended games for young men and women include: 1. dancing for development of the lower half of the body, 2. singing to expand the lungs and regulate breathing, and 3. ball games for insurance of upper torso strength, a raised chest, and good general body posture.<sup>32</sup>

Since the physically unhealthy must compete with the healthy, the unhealthy often crave physical strength and think they find such strength in liquor and narcotics.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>31</sup>Charles Kingsley, "'Nausicaa in London,' or 'The Lower Education of Women,'" p. 114.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>33</sup>Charles Kingsley, "The Tree of Knowledge," p. 167.

These crutches are often the symptoms of disease rather than a disease itself; the real disease is the degeneracy of the general population in its education and aesthetic side of life. Through education comes the alleviation of the ignorance of a great many sanitary procedures. Simple precautions, if taken, would prevent most of the suffering due to the ignorance and lethargy of the masses. Sanitation is simply a matter of active interest on the part of the individual in his own physical, moral, and intellectual welfare.<sup>34</sup> Thus in his speech on "The Massacre of the Innocents," the Reverend Kingsley claimed that the premature death of young children was not due to the will of God, but largely due to neglect, ignorance, and innate stupidity of the parents involved.<sup>35</sup>

Public opinion in the middle of the 19th century was based on the superstition that it was the will of God that illness strike, but the Reverend Charles Kingsley attempted to show in his public campaign against the death of innocent people by disease that scientific studies and practical material conduct of life were intimately related.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Hority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, pp. 213-214.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Kingsley, "The Massacre of the Innocents," p. 267.

<sup>36</sup>Hority Kaufmann, Charles Kingsley, Christian Socialist and Social Reformer, p. 211.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In a discussion of Charles Kingsley's literary works, it has been mentioned that Kingsley's best work was his poetry,<sup>1</sup> but because of his interest in social and sanitary conditions of the day he became distracted for most of his literary and natural life to write for the cause of public welfare.

Yeast, Two Years Ago, and Alton Locke are typical of his social reform writings in which didactic lessons are mouthed by his characters. The characters themselves are not outstanding in depth or clarity, for his purpose was not characterization. As a writer of social evils Kingsley was a complainer, not a sociologist. In sanitation reform, Kingsley's knowledge limited him to assistance in the practical aspects of public information, education, and simple hygienic procedures, for the man was no engineer or medical doctor.<sup>2</sup> Natural science was Kingsley's love, but the principles of physics, chemistry, and anatomy were not

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<sup>1</sup>John Dyer, "Charles Kingsley, Parson, Poet, and Politician," 201.

<sup>2</sup>William Henry Brown, Charles Kingsley--The Work and Influence of Parson Lot, p. 17.

part of the knowledge which he commanded with mastery.

As a lecturer on sanitary and social reform, Kingsley served as a propaganda agent, arousing the spirits of people who were previously oblivious of the fact that sanitation and physical health were related; that social improvement demanded preventive measures be spread throughout the public press and school system to inform people who simply did not relate the application of science to the objective, practical facts of life.<sup>3</sup> What is today taken for granted as trivia in the areas of healthful living and social improvement was a hundred years ago highly abstract theory at the very best, and hardly on a par with the popular notion that disease was a punishment from God, or that the Bible had far more to teach man about socio-economic improvement than did science. In our time the practice of informing the public about the procedures in dealing with epidemics and social problems is one of relative simplicity, for communication and the belief in scientific practices make implementation a fairly easy affair. The 19th century presented a far different picture, for preventive medicine and scientific approaches to social problems had only recently been accepted by the most eminent scientific authorities, scarcely touching the masses

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

of agricultural and industrial poor.

As a social critic and cleric, Kingsley held firmly to old, well established Tory institutions earlier in life, but circa 1840, Kingsley began to consistently present ideas in public which, if logically followed to their proper conclusions, would have led to a revolution in the entire industrial system.<sup>4</sup> The criticisms found in Alton Locke, "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," and Yeast were held by others, who united in the formation of the party known as Christian Chartists (Christian Socialists), which organization was partially responsible for the formation of the cooperative movement and the Workingmen's College.<sup>5</sup>

As a part of these movements, Charles Kingsley was an ideal campaign manager, quick tempered, impatient, and hypertensive, but the usefulness of his suggestions and the sincerity of purpose of his intentions place him in the position of precursor of that day which is today, the age of scientific advancement far beyond that of any other in human history.

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<sup>4</sup>John Dyer, "Charles Kingsley, Parson, Poet, and Politician," 199.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

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