IMPERIALISM IN ENGLISH POETRY

BETWEEN 1875 AND 1900

by
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Preface.

Probably at no time in the history of English Literature did the poets reflect their environment as in the Victorian Age. It was an age of achievement in every field, especially in science, politics and literature. At the same time, however, as time passed, it became an age of doubt and uncertainty. Old standards were destroyed under the force of the new science and the new industrial power, and the end of the century saw the rise of a cynicism which made itself felt in many phases of Victorian life.

One of the most striking occurrences of the age was the rise of Imperialism as a political doctrine. Its influence upon the great masses of the people during the last twenty-five years of the period was extremely powerful, and its emotional appeal swayed the nation strongly from the Queen to the humblest subject of the realm.

It was inevitable then, that the writers of the age would be moved to varying degrees by this tremendous display of power and influence. And that many succumbed to it is recorded in the wide variety of poetry which sprang from Imperialism, especially between the years 1875 and 1900.

Naturally in a study of this literature it was essential to examine the historical and social field to show the relationship between the writers and the events of the age. Thus I have presented a certain minimum and necessary amount of historical and social information with an eye to giving greater clearness and meaning to the verse, and not as an attempt to evaluate the historical data.

Inasmuch as this work deals exclusively with the imperialist poetry of the poets, it is naturally confined in most cases to a limited portion of their work, and consequently no complete evaluation of their

poetical writings is here attempted. I have, however, sought to associate all work pertinent to the imperial aspects of the poetry, so that a complete picture of the poet's political outlook is approximated.

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Chapter One

Social and Political Background

An important detail to realize in the historical account of late nineteenth century England is that the imperial spirit which manifested itself so strongly was not a new and sudden phenomenon which sprang up in the last twenty-five years of the century. It can easily be shown that prior to the 16th century, men's minds had long held the idea that the best and highest form of political organization was the far-flung Empire which would bring together in unity and alliance under one law and in common allegiance, the various peoples of the world.

The words "Imperium Romanorum" were well known to the conquered countries over which the Romans ruled, and the power and might of this great empire left an indelible mark upon the history of mankind. Again, the religious Holy Roman Empire exercised its despotic power until it was destroyed by the liberal thought of Protestantism. These are but two of many empires which from time immemorial have risen, flourished and decayed, each flaunting its might and power.

As far as England is concerned, Imperialism had made itself felt in the sixteenth century in the glorious age of Elizabeth, when Englishmen became conscious of their vigour, and began laying the foundations of empire with their challenge to the then powerful Spanish Empire. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the imperial feeling became closely associated with nationalism, and it was Burke who glorified the aristocratic mission of England to give "knightly succour" to the nations in distress. Signs were prevalent at this time suggesting the idea of England as the "trustee" of the backward people with a type of benevolent patronage, and with George the fourth the word Empire was being substituted for Kingdom, and the

title Sovereign for King.

In opposition to these ideas there arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the doctrine of liberal nationalism fostered by men like Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). The main tenour of its thought was utilitarian, and it stressed the strength of the individual. From this doctrine sprang the well known attitude of laissez-faire in economics and the idea of Free Trade which England adopted. This much can be said for the Benthamites, they did not hold that England had a mission to perform in civilizing the world, and they preferred peace and social development - the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Bentham in his nationalism was therefore pacifist and anti-imperialist, two factors which played an important part in the Liberal ideals and policy of Gladstone in opposition to the Conservative policy of imperial expansion.

It was under the influence of these ideals that the English taste for colonies declined, and this was accentuated by the loss of the American colonies after the War of American Independence. The so-called Manchester School of thought became dominant, and their aims like those of the Benthamites were a material progress and prosperity, a thriving trade and no wars. Thus they naturally sought to have England abdicate colonial responsibility and the imperial mission, and it was Cobden of their number who said.

> The colonies, army, navy and church are with the corn laws merely accessories to our aristocratic government. John Bull has his work cut out for next fifty years to purge his house of these impurities. (1)

The influence of these schools of thought is reflected in the attitude of the English at large who were not interested in colonies, and

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(1) Granville Hicks, Figures of Transition, p.288

had no conception of Empire as such. It was felt that the colonies contributed nothing and that they were more of a hindrance than a help. Since the advent of Free Trade, restrictions on colonial commerce had been swept away and Englishmen complained of the colonies as encumbrances. A number of writers, including, Goldwin Smith, advocated complete independence for the colonies, and as late as 1863 there were many people who either agreed with them or did not care what happened to the colonies. The Americans were showing that they could stand alone without colonies and still prosper, and consequently it was felt that Britain with its superior power both politically and industrially could do likewise.

Nevertheless, when Queen Victoria came to the throne in the year 1837, it was to rule an Empire of wide dimensions which included Canada, India and Australia. It is with the advent of Victoria that great changes, both in the social and political life begin to occur, and little did the young Queen realize that for the next sixty years she would become the living symbol of an age of astonishing development in almost every field.

Politically, the age of Victoria represents the triumph of the middle classes, and Victorianism can be interpreted in terms of the rise of this class, emancipated by the two Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 respectively. There is a stream of middle class prosperity and middle class idealism running through its religion, politics, philosophy and social life.

The main trend was the enjoyment by England of a trade monopoly inasmuch as the Germans and Americans had not yet become the rivals they were later to prove. This era of prosperity extending from the year 1848 to well on in the century, contributed to the growth of a spirit of complacency which viewed the seemingly unchallengable position of British commerce with a feeling of smug pride. Britain had had a good generation's start on her rivals in the matter of industrial development,

in the use of machinery and in the efficiency of her railways. Added to this was the practice of setting aside wealth to earn more wealth, a device which assured her of a dominant position in the world of trade. The mark of this industrial progress was seen in the statistics on trade which showed that the value of exports was more than doubled between the years 1855 and 1874. It was the era of Free Trade and light taxation. There was admittedly much to be done in the field of social work, but it was believed that religion and science, especially science, could soon take care of these problems if people went about their efforts industriously enough.

This period was marked by the great concentration of interest in the affairs of the country itself rather than outside. Such problems of internal import as education, the development of trade unions and the concentration on wiping away slum conditions which existed as a result of the Industrial Revolution, were given a good deal of attention. Municipal government was brought to a more effective point of development, and such things as libraries, art galleries, new methods of sanitation and so on were constantly being undertaken. It was a time when there was a keen public spirit and a consciousness of needed change in many fields.

All this activity shows that the English were not entirely satisfied with their social order, but that a healthy pride in achievement was present. This strong national sense had been stimulated to some extent by the great victory over Napoleon, and much of the zeal exhibited in these days was a rechanneling of the vast amount of energy which had gone into crushing the French dictator.

Added to these practical considerations was a more intangible one - the appreciation of Queen Victoria. The court before her had been the subject of much criticism and public scorn because of its corrupt

nature, but with the coming of a young queen there was aroused in the hearts of the British nation a chivalrous attitude towards the throne. Victoria was proving herself an ideal queen. Her court was above criticism, and in her personal life she was happily married and a model of the virtue and domestic bliss admired by the Victorians. At the same time she was a real constitutional monarch, interfering little in the affairs of state although oftimes her approval or disapproval carried considerable political force, especially in her later years. On the whole, however, she kept within the bounds of her rights, and with the government functioning successfully under the new and extended franchise, and the full tide of economic prosperity assuring rising wages, the people were filled with a general satisfaction both with themselves and their leaders.

During the later years of this period, however, there were a number of wars, and after 1856 England was almost constantly either on the defensive or the offensive in some part of the world. The Crimean War was by far the most impressive, but the war with China and the Indian Mutiny rank closely behind. It was from the Crimean struggle and the heroic deeds of English soldiers in the Mutiny that much of the earliest imperial poetry arises, with most of it celebrating deeds of English bravery.

Despite all the activity on behalf of social improvement England of this period was far from being a Utopia. The extreme class system and the vast amount of poverty contrasted with the vast amount of wealth were an ever present reminder that democracy had not yet prevailed.

The great struggle with Napoleon which had ended in 1815 had left a very distinctive mark on the English character and on the English political pattern which was important in the rise of imperial sentiment.

When the Napoleonic Wars closed they were followed by an unprecedented period of misery brought about by the decline of the war industries and also by lack of foresight on the part of the governing class who were predominantly the church and the aristocracy. The English scene as far as the working class was concerned, was one of "organized hordes of overworked, underpaid and villainously housed human beings..." (2) The failure of the upper class to bring about the necessary reforms did not bring revolution as it had done on the continent, but it brought about parliamentary changes which did not emancipate a large portion of the people. Neither the people in the country who had recently been stripped of their lands and forced into the city to work for a slave wage, nor the lower classes of the city had benefited, but rather the privileges had gone to the rising middle class whose impressive wealth had made it impossible to keep them out of government.

In the cities the common men still struggled for a mere survival, and did not come into contact with any refining influences, because of the lack of an adequate educational system. The Cockney, who was to play an important part in the rise of the imperial sentiment, was among the lower class, and he is represented as being blatantly aggressive, one who delighted in rowdyism, and was conscious of his belonging to a "superior" civilization. These people were little better than the 18th century mobs who had rioted so violently in their day, and it was a difficult job to keep all the energy and zeal the Cockney possessed from turning into the paths of revolution. Outside this group, however, there was a large class of contented, law-abiding citizens, especially those of the skilled labour group, but they were greatly in the minority.

It was in the emotions of these lower classes that the sentiment of imperialism took its hold, and as long as there was prosperity suf-

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(2) Esme Wingfield-Stratford, The Victorian Tragedy, p.2

-ficient to care for the needs of these people they were rowdy but harmless, but when they became restless during the later depressions they were dangerous to the security of the upper class. Imperialism to some extent became the barrier against revolution, because it harnessed all the emotional forces which otherwise might have exploded against the unfairness of the English social system.

To some extent it was just this fear of revolution which forced the Reform Bills through Parliament. The middle class seemed the likely ones to respect the privileges of the aristocracy and at the same time possessed a larger share of intelligence than the illiterate mob. Over and above this a good number of the impoverished aristocracy were marrying for money, and the money was in the hands of the middle class. The middle class who came to power gained in authority and numbers, and these men of business became strong supporters of the Whig Party, and were essentially a peace-loving materialistic class.

They were interested in peace because it was favourable to business, and the political policy of England for some time was directed towards keeping the peace, or at least taking part as little as possible in military activity. This attitude created what has been described as "splendid isolation", and during this period England sought to stay aloof from the affairs of other nations, and scrupulously avoided foreign entanglements. Through the sixties and seventies, the affairs of government thus ran smoothly and the Commons, The Lords and the Queen showed a unity of thought and action which found its support in the prosperity of the period.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 became the symbol of this period of Victorian progress and satisfaction, and there was no reserve in the extravagant praise which was lavished on this spectacle, described as one which could not easily be repeated because of its magnitude and

grandeur. High hopes and aspirations were expressed that the affair would be a great social lesson which would show that,

> ...the poorest of our fellows share equally, perhaps more largely, in proportion, than the richest in the land; for it is by the stimulus thus given to energy and enterprise of the world that they must hope to improve their condition and rise in the scale of society. (3)

There is no question that national pride and admiration ran high, for in twenty years men had invented more new things than in the previous five hundred, and these advances in the fields of science and technology were on display, giving to the Victorian a sense of great intellectual capacity.

The Victorian in his artistic appreciation liked to see size and intricacy, and his taste for the elaborate was extreme. The artistic designs of the time show that the artists were aware of the vastness and diversity of Empire, although the people themselves were not. The so-called Ellenborough Plate is an excellent example of Victorian aesthetic symbol. It is a silver dinner service which consists only of seven pieces, and finds room for some twenty-seven carefully carved human and animal figures, including seven camels, three elephants, a rhinocerous, a lion, five Sepoys, a Chinese captive, an Afghan, two river gods, two nymphs and a pair of classical figures which represent Asia crowning Britannia, while the centre piece contains a bas relief depicting the ratification of the treaty of Nanking and views of Calcutta, Kabul and Canton.

It can be seen that the Victorian imagination drew upon varied lands for its inspiration, and besides, much of the Victorian work is based upon borrowings from other cultures such as Gothic, Classical, Elizabethan, Moorish, Indian and Far Eastern in shaping the designs. This

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(3) Peter Quennel, Victorian Panorama, p.61

type of art with intricacy and size predominant, is symbolic of the consciousness of the tradition of vast Empire, and the great diversity of peoples within its scope. The development of this consciousness had already taken hold in the minds of many of the posts, among them Tennyson, and it is not a far cry away from the realization of these things in the minds of the political leaders and the people themselves. To William Morris, the poet, who saw the spectacle, there was no enthusiasm and achievement, and it is reported that he stood aghast at the appalling ugliness of the materials exhibited, revolted by their heaviness, tastelessness and banality. Be this as it may, these artistic creations depict the extraordinary enlargement of the human consciousness, a factor which was to play an important part in the later development of the imperial ideal. Everywhere there was a sense of the elaborate, not only in furniture and art, but in dress and in the love of pomp and festivity - coronations, funerals, jubilees and military parades were all for the Victorians times of great emotion and eventually they were to become the focal points for a wild onrush of imperial feelings.

It has been said of Englishmen at this period that their four main interests were business, politics, sport and religion. In business they released their love of commercial gain - the materialism of the age - in politics they found an outlet for their argumentative and pent-up feelings - in sport they let loose their excess energy and gave vent to their sporting instinct - whereas in religion they were able to obtain the sanction of God on their endeavours, and soothe their moral consciences. Everyone of these interests became a part of the imperial scheme, and it has been suggested that the rise of sport in England later in the century was correlated with the rise of imperialism. As far as religion is concerned, the fundamental philosophy of the Victorian middle-class was expediency, and always when this attitude is pre-

-sent religion consequently suffers from rationalization and a tendency to overemphasize the more obvious aspects of its qualities. Inasmuch as the triumph of the materialistic middle-class assumed a mask of virtue, Victorian religion developed a strict formality which invited hypocrisy.

The early Victorians were strong in their pursuit of duty and the search for domestic virtue was carried on with great thoroughness. They were trained to consider suffering as one of the manifestations of God and their family portraits suggest fortitude rather than gaiety. This inward steeling of self against the trials of life often produced a hypocritical attitude towards life, but at the same time it developed a sense of tenacity which became part of the spirit of the English people. There was a strong enmity to natural expressions of joy, which apparently was an unpleasing thing to the Victorian God, a stern and just God filled with divine wrath. He is a God who has put everything in its accepted place, and having so ordained, it would be criminal to change. It was indeed:

> The rich man in his castle
> The poor man at his gate
> God made them high or lowly
> And ordered their estate. (4)

This accepted scheme of things is well portrayed in Barrie's The Admirable Crichton. Such an attitude tended to breed a strong conservation in the Victorian - a quality which he carried into his politics.

The element of materialism which played a major role in the growth of imperialism was no more thoroughly expressed than in the earlier Victorians. They believed in hard work, and the mass of the people were socially conscious, consequently the moral standards were adopted to meet the needs of the frugal and hard-working people. In this scheme, worldly success was not only permitted but it was encouraged, and the

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(4) Esme Wingfield-Stratford, op.cit., p.63.

Protestant doctrine of works fitted in neatly with this idea. Success was evidence of God's favour, and the strong relation which existed between the individual soul and God gave strength and a strong sense of individualism to the Victorian's way of life. Those strong in the faith, obedient to God, anxious to work, would undoubtedly succeed. All this developed a philosophy that man could best serve his community and his God by pursuing his own interests by honest means, and all the policies of laissez-faire, Free Trade, private enterprise had the sanction of God and the support of the state.

For the labourer, however, there was the doctrine which told him not to worry too much about earthly success, but rather to lay up for himself "treasures in heaven". His was the duty of putting right his soul before God, and struggling as best he could with what the world had to offer, but his final reward must needs be in heaven. This was a popular doctrine with the employer.

Gladstone, an outstanding figure of the Victorian era, was a notable exponent of the virtues of Victorian morality. He possessed an intense and methodical industry, integrity, a sound business instinct, a grave and dignified demeanour and a self-conscious piety. His great wish was that England should stand before the world as a Christian power, but nevertheless during his office he crushed the Egyptian nationalist movement in the interest of the Egyptian bondholders.

The ideal of obedience was strong in the Victorian, especially in family life, which paid tribute to the patriarchal system whereby the father governed as God might govern, justly but sternly. The case of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is not at all an unusual one for that period. The obedience was particularly expected of women who were supposed to be subservient to the dominant male under the scheme of Hebrew morality. This ideal of obedience was certainly reflected in the Imperial scheme

of things, and it is one of the fundamental qualities demanded by the state of the people, and recommended by the poets when the imperialist wave reached its height a few decades later.

The gradual breakdown of this stern religious system did not see the destruction of these forces of duty, obedience and justice, but rather their shift into, first the evangelical movement, and then into the imperialist movement. The rise of the Oxford Movement came at a time when the religious fabric was in a state of turmoil. The rise of the Oxford Movement in the thirties and of the Lux Mundi group in the eighties are both symbolic of this breakdown in church power and in the old standards of morality. Both these groups sought to bring the church back to the truth which they claimed was unchanging, and they operated by "Tracts for the Times" which contained sermons by many well known clergymen. Both sought to range their beliefs as bulwarks against the materialism of the age. The church had failed to meet the challenge of the Industrial Revolution and the attempt was made to turn the interests from reason to the soul.

This evangelicalism eventually imposed upon the Englishmen such things as Sunday Observance, and philanthropy. The outward signs of the latter showed themselves in an increased missionary effort, the building of hospitals and orphanages and philanthropic organizations of all kinds, and Victorian society is renowned for its stress upon social betterment and famed for its charities. Almost every noble family had its pet charity, and the "Charity Ball" was the social event of the season. Evangelicalism played an important part in the stimulating of the Englishman's energies to rid himself of the restraints which he had had imposed upon him, and one side of the Victorian reaction was against the stilted morality of the day. The

Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley period was a more severe renunciation of the prudery and hypocritical morality of the day in a blaze of sensual beauty and artificial and forced sophistication. The imperial movement drew also from these evangelical outbursts in catching up much of the released energy from religion which the spasmodic movements could not hold. Those who could not turn to the decadence of the Yellow Book and all its implications turned to the opposite school - the "activist" school which stressed reality and down-to-earth manliness, which made a very direct and forceful contribution to imperialism.

Added to the powers which were breaking down the old standards of morality was the even more virile attack of Darwin's theories in his book, The Origin of the Species published in 1859. If there was any work which shocked the Victorian more than this it must have remained unpublished. All manner of wild ideas circulated about man coming from monkeys, and irate people denounced the book as a product of the devil. In its wider sense, the implications were vast for the religious and social fabric of the country, and in many cases it held a strong appeal, especially for the strong individualist and the competitive business man. Each found in the philosophy of the survival of the fittest and the struggle for existence a ready made tool with which to justify their every act. It was unquestionably true that the imperialist ideas which later took such a strong hold found it much to their liking. The cut-throat competition for territory and the power politics which usually accompanied the rise of Empires were directed towards national survival in which a "shouldering aside of the weak by the strong" was an essential policy.

As can well be imagined, these various changes in thought dealt a body-blow to the smugness and self-satisfaction which the Victorians

had cherished, and developed a national sense of uncertainty. They could no longer lean upon religion for it was uncertain - they could not yet trust to science for it was still untried. The political scene offered them some satisfaction in its apparent stability. The Victorians had seen the countries of Europe writhe in the throes of revolution in their struggles for liberty and democracy, and they felt that in their own island they had achieved something of these qualities by a sane and slow progress. And yet politics offered them no fixed pathway, no brilliant light to capture their energies. Thus it was that the emphasis began to turn to trade because it seemed the only sure and certain thing. It brought them material goods to satisfy their needs and absorbed their energies in the pursuit of commercial success, as well as giving them a feeling of importance over their position in the world's markets. England, the world's workship, was the pride and boast of every Cockney as well as of the middle class. For the first time they really became conscious of the trade which had been more or less accepted fact, and there seemed little fear in those days that any country would challenge England's dominant position.

There had been a keen sense of order in the early Victorian scheme of things - Empire had expanded in orderly and unemotional fashion - trade had developed in an orderly manner and men were setting about solving their social problems in a more scientific and orderly way. As is usual where there is a stress on order there is little emotion and a predominance of reserve. People absorbed in their prosperity were little excited about the colonies and less about expansion of Empire, and the government tended to avoid further responsibilities of an imperial nature. Enthusiasm for expansion was confined as Elton says to "a limited number of Humanitarians, Evangelicals and Radical imperialists", (5) each of whom had their own particular reasons for wishing to see

an expanded Empire. What imperial development did take place in the early years of the Victorian period had met with little opposition or competition from other countries, and the only nation the English feared was Russia who stood a massive threat to the rich land of India. Consequently, hatred for Russia was by far the most dominant feeling about another country, and it showed itself in the emotionalism which arose over the Crimean War.

Thus, although stirring changes were taking place in the inner currents of English life, it was still possible for a lead writer on the "Times" to say with confidence in 1871:

> We can look forward at the present with undisturbed satisfaction...turn where we may we find no traces of decadence. (6)

There may have been no signs of decadence, but what is now unmistakably clear is that many of the factors, both in the individual character and national policy, which gave rise to imperialism were there like smouldering fires awaiting the coming of events which would set off the imperial fervour.

The first of these events was the unification of Germany, an action which had far reaching influence on English trade and politics. Bismarck, the German leader, had inspired the people with a national egoism which was to give rise to a strong sense of nationalism among the nations, and part of the imperial policy of England drew its stimulus from this ever growing national feeling which arose in these years. The period of "splendid isolation" ended in those years in which the English were faced with competition in trade from the newly unified Germany, and the quick-stepping Americans, and a greater consideration for economic interests and markets soon involved them in all forms of Euro-

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(5) Lord Elton, Imperial Commonwealth, p. 363.

(6) Edith Batho & Bonamy Dobreé, The Victorians and After, p.140

-pean and Eastern diplomatic juggling. This new diplomacy called for a strong Empire, so that its voice might speak effectively in the councils of Europe, and besides this, France, smarting under the defeat of Germany, began to turn her eyes towards the acquisition of colonies to offset her losses, a policy which eventually led her to a clash with the British at Fashoda.

Under the stimulation of these various events the government began to take cognisance of Empire, and in the year 1872 Disraeli, then Prime Minister, proclaimed in a speech at the Crystal Palace in London that the preservation of Empire was one of the important ideas of his Conservative Party. He said in part:

> No minister in this country will do his duty who neglects an opportunity of reconstructing as much as possible our colonial Empire. (7)

Undoubtedly the Prime Minister was stimulated by the changing ideas of world politics, and also as an astute leader he probably saw that it was good to encourage the imperial ideal as a party move. The successful consolidation of Germany along national lines had made a parallel consolidation of Britain seem essential. Also, there had been in the German victory over France in 1871 a suggestion of the power of military might which found its strength in the "blood and iron" policy of the German Chancellor. This military spirit continued its development among the various powers until most of them by the end of the century were armed camps, and it also contributed towards the idea that war was a legitimate instrument of national policy. This idea encouraged an almost trigger-like menace in these various countries, and in England there grew up a belligerency which was extremely sensitive to any foreign challenge to British interests or prestige. This revival of militarism in Europe went hand in hand with imperial growth.

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(7) J. E. Tyler, The Struggle for Imperial Unity, p.1

Added to these external forces at work there was an even more fundamental one within England itself in the question of separation, which became a problem not only to the political leaders but to the people themselves. In the wide national interest given this question and in the formidable forces which grew up against it, there is the early expression of the imperial feeling.

It was this question of separation which cast suspicion on the Gladstonian government of 1868 in their dealings with New Zealand when the colony was refused military assistance in their efforts to fight the natives, and were denied a loan from the Imperial Government to cover war expenditures. At this time it became current information among the English people that the country was contemplating the dissolution of Empire, and it aroused considerable alarm both in political and public thinking, and the final reconciliation of New Zealand to the Mother Country was received with great favour. The development at this time of the Royal Colonial Institute to arouse interest in colonial affairs was also widely applauded.

With the defeat of Gladstone and the coming of the Disraeli Government in 1874, there was a change in policy, and the year 1868 can be considered as the crest of the anti-imperialist feeling in England. From 1875 on, the imperialist was in the saddle, with imperial sentiment continuing to grow steadily from this date. Out of the twenty-seven years of government which followed, the Conservatives held office for eighteen of them, and were to a greater or less degree imperialist in their aims with the avowed intention of extending rather than consolidating the Empire. The Liberal Party tended on the whole to keep to its anti-imperialist sentiments, and because of this, the growing mass of public opinion on behalf of a "Greater England" was against them.

It is notable that the growth of imperialism is closely associated with the rising political consciousness of the people. Ever since the

1884 emancipation of a large body of working class electors, the political parties were going more and more to the people, and statesmen were making speeches up and down the land during election campaigns, a practice which Queen Victoria did not approve of. This growing power of the lower classes made the development of a political ideal which would capture mass enthusiasm almost a necessity, and the Conservatives were shrewd enough to see that imperialism and its attendant feelings had found a place in the English heart.

Thus the Disraeli government of 1874-1880 went confidently about its business of laying the foundations of imperial expansion. Disraeli purchased the control of the Suez Canal and made England an "Asiatic Power and Oriental Empire", by conferring upon Queen Victoria the title of Empress of India after a long and heated debate in the Commons over the Titles Act. To substantiate and give reality to the Crown he sent the Prince of Wales on a tour of India in 1875 which proved to be a great success. Disraeli cleverly realized that the Indian leaders and people would be more influenced if they had a direct ruler rather than if they had not, and the legend of the "Great White Queen" was happily fostered in India. To many Englishmen at the time, this was a distasteful exhibition and the act was not without its critics. Again on behalf of India Disraeli championed the Turks against the Russians on the grounds that Turkey was essential to the security of that country. He also established control over Egypt in combination with France, both working through the country's economic bankruptcy to establish themselves as powers behind the Egyptian throne and government. Added to these more major achievements there were such minor ones as the conquest of the Zulus and the annexation of the Transvaal in South Africa.

Disraeli, however, did not only present an imperialist policy to his nation, but also promised a great deal of social reform which he was unable to accomplish. The English people were becoming more rest-

-less for internal reforms, and the struggle between social betterment within the country and imperial expansion outside had not been completely settled by 1880. Englishmen had acquired a good deal of national independence and popular self-government and the energy which had gone into the achievement of those ends had to be harnessed. A growing consciousness of the vast differences which existed between the various classes of Englishmen stimulated the cry for social reform in education, church and civic government and working conditions. Disraeli sensed this, and sought to mix it with imperialism. Imperialism, however, at this time was essentially the doctrine of the upper class and the aristocracy. Privilege has always felt the need of strong economic backing, and they believed that it could be obtained through imperialism. It was necessary, now, however, to win the support of the masses to the imperial way, but this was a slow process and one which could not be done by a commercial appeal, but had to be a strongly developed emotional sentiment. Disraeli sought to build this sentiment in his talks about the glory and pride of Empire and in presenting them with the ideal of choosing:

> Whether you will be a great country, an imperial country, a country where your sons when they rise, rise to paramount positions, and obtain not merely the esteem of your countrymen, but command the respect of the world. (8)

Unfortunately for Disraeli, Englishmen were not ready for this emotional imperialism or aggressiveness of policy, but were more concerned with social reform and consequently in 1880 the Conservative Government gave way to Gladstone's Liberals.

Immediately there was a change in foreign policy and Gladstone with his moral pacifism withdrew from Afghanistan and the Transvaal and only with reluctance undertook the government of Egypt. By far the most im-

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(8) Ibid., p.18.

-portant of his moves was the proposed Home Rule for Ireland. It aroused a furore in the public mind as well as in the minds of the Conservatives, and Lord Randolph Churchill described it as trafficking with treason and an exaltation of disloyalty. A fear began to be felt that the colonies might be snapped up by other powers now that France, Russia and Germany were showing increased interest in the colonial venture. The Home Rule feud had wide repercussions because Gladstone had jumped all the necessary stages towards educating the public to accept the idea, and it was looked upon as a vicious piece of separation, consequently the sentiment of the nation swung back to the Tory imperialism which would protect the Empire against the attempts of those who would break it up. Gladstone was defeated on the Home Rule issue and resigned. The new pride of Empire was rising and the people were becoming intolerant of any apparent rift in the majesty of the imperial scheme.

Another event which served to arouse the indignation of the nation to a white heat was the murder of Gordon at Khartoum where he had gone to arrange for the surrender of the Sudan to the Mahdi. Being a soldier and not a diplomat, Gordon could not bear the thought of surrender, and so instead he fought and was murdered. To many this murder showed the "tragic consequences of an internationalist evangelism", (9) and aroused hatred rather than sympathy for the half-civilized heathens in the countries under British rule. There was an incredible amount of talk of revenge, and the Conservatives kept the issue alive for a long period, encouraging the passions of the people. This revenge was postponed, however, until ten years later when the hero of that day, Kitchener, brought satisfaction to the English people.

In respect to such incidents as this, it must be remembered that the daily press was becoming important in the moulding of public opinion. There was arising an avid desire for the sensational in international affairs and the newspapers with their war correspondents and

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(9) André Maurois, The Edwardian Era, p.104

the telegraph at their disposal made the most of this desire. Highly coloured reports of clashes with tribesmen in India, and unknown peoples in strange lands were rushed back to England where a highly imaginative mass were only too ready to gobble them up. All this added greatly to the consciousness of the colonies, and the average Englishman became proud of the idea of other Englishmen in far-off lands. He was also proud that his country had much to do with the building up of Canada from the level of a French river settlement to a strong united country, and had immeasurably assisted the growth of Australia from a penal colony, and South Africa from a Dutch trading post and agricultural colony to a well-developed industrial land. Much pleasure and confidence was drawn from these feelings and it could be safely averred by this time that the sight of vast areas coloured red on the map was beginning to make Englishmen swell with pride.

It must also be remembered that the colonies themselves had become more strongly attached to the Mother Country. New Zealand was loathe to take action against England in the crisis of 1868, and Canada on the whole was anxious to maintain its unity with England. The colonies no longer seemed so far away to the people "at home", and improved communications brought the various members of Empire closer together. This fostering of a sense of nearness strengthened in the colonies a feeling of the kinship with England and all its noble and ancient traditions.

What was equally important was that the people were becoming convinced that imperialism was essential to prosperity as a 104,000 workers demonstrated when they signed a petition asking the Queen to safeguard her colonies which:

> ...were won for Your Majesty and settled by the valour and enterprise and treasure of the English people... and ought not to be surrendered, but transmitted to Your Majesty's successors as they were received by Your Majesty. (10)

This was all the more pertinent when at the close of the seventies the sense of security which England had felt concerning its trade supremacy began to weaken. A series of depressions beginning in 1876 and lasting to 1879, with only a brief recovery, then another depression reaching from 1883-1889 which was followed by a boom until 1890 and then another bad depression from 1893-1894, had shaken English economic complacency and made them realize that their monopolistic position had ended. The collapse of agriculture through the dumping of American wheat which the improved steamship service and railway facilities made possible, alarmed the farmers as prices dropped to new low levels and they realized that they could not compete with the vast areas of the newly opened up middle western states. In other fields rents dropped and bankruptcies occurred at a disturbing rate. In desperation people turned to the idea of the colonies as a place for new markets, and consequently the possession of colonies meant the possession of markets - the more colonies, the more markets.

The development of imperialism under Disraeli in the early seventies had been essentially the imperialism of prestige. Admittedly there was a consciousness of the new economic challenges to English trade, but it was more the consciousness that small states were in a condition of decline and that the emphasis was shifting to a world which was forming itself into great empires. To maintain the English position in this scheme of things, Disraeli had invoked the appeal of prestige for Eng-

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(10) Granville Hicks, op.cit., p.291.

-lishmen and pride in Empire which had been rejected by a people unready for this imperial pill. In the new need for world markets, however, imperialism looked attractive and the nation turned towards it for salvation rather than for mere love of prestige.

Empire became associated with the alleviation of human suffering, first by providing new markets for English manufacturers and secondly as a means of disposing of over population. Froude in a series of articles published in the Fraser Magazine expressed the desire to draw the Empire closer together for economic and military co-operation. He saw it as a relief for the over-industrialization of England which had brought so much human suffering, and his ideas found a good deal of popular support among the people. This form of imperialism had for its aim the knitting together of what was already Empire rather than the forwarding of imperial aims. This idea of binding the Empire closer together served to detract from the Socialist doctrines which were beginning to make their appearance. As a matter of fact, the imperialists were rather alarmed by the progress which socialism was making as it proclaimed the idea that the first charge of government was the welfare of the people at home. The imperialists agreed on the importance of welfare, but associated it with expansion of Empire and this course seemed to the people the quickest and most effective.

This consciousness of Empire had grown considerably by 1884 when the Imperial Federation League was founded for the purpose of carrying out Froude's ideas of consolidating the Empire. It was before meetings of the League that many of the well known political figures declared their passion for imperialism. Lord Rosebery who later became Prime Minister considered the League as the established mouthpiece of imperial sentiment in the country, and it was before one of those meetings that he described the development of Empire in terms of a game of chess. It

had begun with castles, such as the acquisition of Malta, Quebec and Gibraltar - the scheme of colonization had been carried out by knights and bishops, and lastly came the pawns and where they go the Empire goes. The last remark referred, of course, to the immigrants who no doubt had no objections, but felt quite proud at being referred to as pawns in the great scheme of Empire.

Rosebery was to play an important part in the development of the Empire, and like many other imperial enthusiasts, he had developed his feeling after a world tour when he became impressed by the capacity of his countrymen and the extent of the Empire. He openly declared in a speech made in 1883 that he saw the Empire as a communion of races and that:

> I have always hoped that communion of races might exist as long as my life lasted, but since my visit to Australia, it will become a passion with me to endeavour to preserve that union... (11)

The communion of races was also referred to by Rosebery as the "commonwealth of nations", a name which in recent years has succeeded the title of Empire.

Other organizations sprang up rapidly for the purpose of furthering the interests of Empire and there was a considerable talk of Customs Unions, Unions for Defence and so on. The idea of a worldwide organization firmly united together was taking hold as people sought to make the so-called "Greater Britain" of Sir Charles Dilke a reality. Most of these schemes and organizations failed because of their lack of a concrete program of action. This was the idea of imperialism for security and co-operation rather than for aggression and prestige, and undoubtedly these ideas which in themselves were sound did much to win over the people to the imperial ideal.

A great number of writers in the prose field had taken up the

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(11) Marquis of Crewe, Lord Rosebery, Vol. I, p.185.

vindication of Empire, and Froude's "Oceana" in 1886 dealt with the necessity of Empire. More important, however, was Seeley's "Expansion of England" which made a great number of the English aware of the scope of Empire. Added together,the literary, political and economic elements active in this period were directing the enthusiasms and vigour of the people towards the ideal of Empire.

It is quite natural that the growing consciousness of world Empire would lead to the considerations of military and naval affairs as it had done in other countries. The newspapers,combined with increased education which was becoming available, were making people aware of the power of the army and navy, especially the latter. The recognition that England survived by the sea was strongly realized, and that if the sea routes were lost, England was lost. It had always been England's policy to keep up an immense navy which was equivalent in its strength to that of any two other powers. Englishmen accepted their navy as a matter of course, always assuming that it was by far the largest and most powerful in the world. A good deal of public apathy had developed about the navy and after the so-called "naval scare" in 1884 which laid the foundations of the naval race between England and Germany, attempts were made to augment the British people's interest in naval affairs. The increasing interest in both army and navy was in keeping with similar development in every country, and as imperialism grew, the fighting forces were constantly expanded. A new pride and interest was stimulated in the traditions of army and navy, and in their deeds in foreign lands and these in turn aided the development of imperial sentiment, especially when they were recorded by the poet with all the emotional fervour and colour which could be mustered.

Thus imperialism was expressing itself in almost every phase of life. The military men spoke of it in terms of raw materials to forge

the weapons of war - the navy saw it in terms of more coaling stations and naval bases for an expanding navy- the business man saw it in the form of new markets, the clergyman as a chance to spread the gospel and bind the Empire with a chain of mission stations, and the man in the street associated it with prosperity, while the colonial officials looked forward to better jobs. The investor of capital felt more secure with the Union Jack supported by a strong army and navy behind him, and the continued growth of imperialism among the people was a form of security for his interests. Everywhere there was rising enthusiasm, but it was not until the last decade of the century that the full force of imperial emotionalism broke loose in England.

By the year 1886, then, all these aims were firmly established, and the stage was set for the last and most spectacular act of the imperial show. The scene of the first act took place in South Africa at Witwatersrand in the year 1884,when the discovery of gold in the Transvaal drew the eyes of the world to the South African Republic. The very fact that African boundaries were still undetermined made the country an excellent hunting ground for "claim-pegging" imperialism,and more than aroused the interests of the English industrialist and adventurer.Here were gold and diamonds to be found in a land which was in the possession of 50,000 Dutch farmers. Thousands upon thousands of Englishmen flocked to the Transvaal, stimulated by their lust for gold and commercial gain, and soon the population was tripled. For the Dutch, the situation was a difficult one, and one which was fraught with danger to their rule as they eventually found out.

At about the same time, England was still in the grip of a depression, and the continuation of low wages and unemployment stimulated the 1886 riots in which thousands of men and women stormed down the Pall Mall demanding bread. Coupled with this, there was the cry against

the Little Englanders who sought to keep back the expansion of Empire, and they were being made the scapegoats for the economic decline. An enthusiasm was abroad for men who would uphold the interests of the Empire above all else, in the hope that they would bring back prosperity and inflate England's prestige.

These men were soon forthcoming in the persons of Rhodes, Chamberlain and Salisbury, who became the much admired symbols of the imperial movement. Joseph Chamberlain, who although not the Prime Minister, was by far the most powerful man in the government, had quit the ranks of the liberals over the Home Rule issue. In his early days he had been a vigorous opponent of the imperialism of Disraeli but gradually he was won over to the cause, and he became the most ardent imperialist. Added to these men was a young author who was winning great popularity with the masses, and who was becoming recognized as the greatest of the imperial singers, Rudyard Kipling.

The year 1887 saw the pomp and circumstance of the first jubilee, in which Queen Victoria was praised to the skies in eloquent speeches and poems, and the interest of the masses was turned from social questions to the festivities. A great impression was made by all the parade of Empire, and after it was over the Englishman did not feel quite so bad towards his economic difficulties, because after all he was a part of a much more significant thing in the Empire. Victoria had reigned for as long as anyone could remember, and in her there seemed to be an eternal quality about the Empire. All attempts to disintegrate it had failed, and instead there was a stronger and more powerful bond than ever uniting the sprawling territories as the loyalty of the colonies manifested itself at the Throne of the Queen-Empress. The English imagination was undoubtedly stirred by this festival, and it was indeed satisfying to hear ringing in the ears the idea that the sun never set upon the mighty British Empire.

To those who looked below the surface, however, the decline had already set in. Although there still was a fair amount of prosperity in certain groups, trade had suffered considerably in the years previous to the Jubilee. All the certainties had gone, and the age of the decadents was near. In these years England fell into the hands of the Philistines, and their greatest champion was the Goliath imperialism, in whose strength and arrogance they put their trust.- an imperialism which was to be badly shaken by the Boers.

The English found themselves at this time in history, almost bereft of friends. There was growing jealousy among the other nations over her expanding Empire, and from time to time England was involved with France and Germany over colonial troubles, and Russia was hated because of the India threat. The whole tenour of politics in the international field at this time was one of pure self interest. It became the fixed policy of each of the Great Powers to simply meet and defeat the policy of each other, or at least to offset any gains the other might make by equalling that gain. Bismarck abandoned a purely internal policy for Germany to search for colonies, and the French too were hunting the colonial field. On the whole the Great Powers recognized each other's rights in the colonial question, but a good deal of ill feeling was aroused over many issues. The English were conscious of their particularly isolated position in the diplomatic scene, and although they were anxious to find friends, they were also stimulated to a sense of defiance, and their ambition to achieve political and economic self-sufficiency was augmented.

With the coming of the eighteen nineties, Imperialism and its accompanying sentiments quickly rose to their highest point of vigour and enthusiasm, and seizing of territories both in Africa and Asia increased alarmingly. The unwillingness to assume new imperial responsibilities had disappeared and rapid annexation of territory was car-

-ried on with political eagerness supported by public acclaim. The chief delight was in "painting the map red", and much of the territory acquired was simply for the mere acquiring or to keep someone else from taking it. This was an imperialism of acquisition which gave birth to the idea that it was the duty and destiny of the English to take care of the so-called "backward peoples", and to bring them the benefits of the white man's justice, religion and civilization. The idea of Teutonic race superiority was conjured up, and it can be easily imagined how this could degenerate into a jingoism of arrogance and blatancy.

It was Salisbury's third government in 1895 when the imperial tide was running high that a number of events occurred which immeasurably contributed to the growth of this jingoism. The liberals were lost to power when they had split over the Home Rule issue, and Chamberlain had formed the Liberal-Unionist party with all the imperialist feelings of the old Disraelian tories. It was the Salisbury-Chamberlain-Rosebery combination which reconquered the Soudan and so avenged the death of Gordon. This conquest was hailed by the press in terms of satisfied honour and justifiable revenge, and the people took up this spirit and turned it into a jingo satisfaction. This administration also became involved with the French over the Fashoda incident, which was deeply felt by the people as a challenge to English honour and prestige, and added more fuel to the jingo fires which were by this time burning brightly. The success of all these political moves, and their popularity with the people is attested to by the re-election of the government in the so-called 'Khaki Election' of 1900, during the period when the Boer War was under way.

With Chamberlain in his expansionist policies was Cecil Rhodes, who was the man of action for those who dreamed. Rhodes' spectacular career in industry culminated in 1888 with his merger of the diamond mines and in his gaining control of the goldfields in the Transvaal.

From then on his interest was directed towards politics, and he finally became Prime Minister of the Cape. His main ambition, however, was the desire to make England a great Empire, and this involved him in the specific task of trying to build a railway from the Cape to Cairo.

Rhodes had been stimulated by the wild speeches he had heard from the unemployed in London, and he believed that imperialism would help to solve the problems of labour by taking care of surplus population and by furnishing new markets. In keeping with this idea, he put his faith in expansion: "history has taught us that expansion is everything" (12) were the words of his motto, and they also became the keynote of a government policy which involved him in plots and counterplots with the various tribes in Africa and finally with the Dutch.

Ever since the discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa, Kruger, the President of the Transvaal, had been struggling to keep control of the government, but by inefficient methods of giving the voting franchise to some and not to others in the hope that he could keep the government in Dutch hands, he alienated not only the inflowing thousands, but also the Dutch themselves. His position at the beginning of 1895 was not very secure, but with the Jameson Raid, conditions changed, and Kruger's position was consolidated by the support of the whole Transvaal. Rhodes in his struggle with Kruger was in an excellent position, having seized Buchananland and cut the Boers off from the sea, while internally he had helped to keep the so-called Uitlanders (those without a vote) in a state of ferment in the Transvaal by the use of his powerful press and none too scrupulous supporters.

In 1895, the Colonial Office gave Rhodes permission to bring down Dr. Jameson and five hundred troops from the North to the Buchananland

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(12) M. A. Gooch, Imperialism, p.360.

border, the object being to compel Kruger to yield to the demands for a franchise and aid the uprising on behalf of the Uitlanders which had been planned. Jameson, however, did not wait for his orders when he reached the Transvaal, but went in on his own, and carried on a running fight with the Boers. Repercussions from this act were of the gravest nature. Germany supported Kruger and aroused the ire of the British. Jameson was tried and convicted, and given a jail sentence. In the eyes of the masses, however, both Rhodes and Jameson were heroes, and they were everywhere acclaimed. The English government disclaimed all association with these activities, although Chamberlain placed his approval on Rhodes.

Rhodes stands as one of the heroes of the period, and Salisbury likened him to Raleigh in his adventurous spirit. Judgement, however, on his character has been mixed, and history on the whole has judged him of much less proportions. He seemed to possess a completely parochial mind, inasmuch as he never really realized the harm he was doing England in international relations, nor seldom recognized the rights of others as long as the Empire was fostered. Gooch says in an early article that his

> ...theory of civilization is so crude, his ethics so low, that he is utterly unfit to control the destiny of any country white, black, old or new. (13)

Whatever the final judgement, he showed considerable wisdom in his will when he endowed the now famous Rhodes Scholarships for the furtherance of education.

In the midst of all this diplomatic excitement, the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria took place in 1897. Not only was it a personal triumph for the Queen, but it was a mighty pageant of power. There were parades, fireworks, princes came from the vassal states of India,

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(13) M. A. Gooch, op. cit., p.362

Prime Ministers from the various colonies, and they beheld the glory of Empire and its naval might at the great naval review at Spithead. All of which gave the English public a gluttonous feast of pomp that consumed reason and sanity. "The Little Old Lady in Black" became the mightiest symbol of power on earth, and the object of innumerable paeans of praise in songs, poems and stories as the Empire knelt before her throne in adoration. Ireland however, refused to join in the celebrations for a reign during which

> ....the people of Ireland had diminished one half and taxations doubled and forty-two Coercion Acts had been passed to deprive them of their liberty. (14)

From the Jubilee on, sword-rattling braggadocio was at its worst, and it became a positive intoxication to think of an empire

> ...whose drumbeat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours encircles the globe with an unbroken chain of martial airs. (15)

The great questions at home were forgotten in the welter of outside interests which continually cropped up through the aggressive imperial policy, and social reform was shelved for imperial expansion. Many of the more liberal voices were raised against the huge expenditures involved in the imperial scheme, and sought to point out the needs at home, but these were scornfully called "Little Englanders" and were silenced. Everywhere from the aristocrat to the poorest Cockney there was a confident swaggering and boastful air which let itself loose in music halls, Primrose League meetings, and at any other opportunity. The idea of conquests was predominant no matter for what reason, and the conscience was easily salved by the idea that all was done because it

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(14) J.A.Spender, Great Britain, Empire and Commonwealth, p.114.

(15) Robert Wallace, The Seamy Side of Imperialism, Contemporary Review Vol.LXXV, p.782.

was the Destiny of England under God to be a great imperial nation - an attitude which the poets contributed to most effectively.

Following close on the heels of the Jubilee came the Boer War which grew directly out of the differences in South Africa between the Dutch and English. The years of the war were marked by a savage jingoism which sought to cover up the surprise and anger which the English experienced over the defeats their armies suffered, and their overblown imperial egoism was slowly deflated. After three years of hard fighting the Boers were finally defeated, and with that defeat British imperialism in its cruder form came to an end. The bubble of the chosen race was also pricked, and England advanced into the twentieth century with a much clearer head and a better sense of proportion as to the social and political values which counted towards human progress.

Chapter Two

Tennyson and Imperialism

Frederick Wedmore, in his preface to the book, Poems of Love and Pride in England, observes that poetry which has spoken of love and religion has been for all time, but that poetry about

> ...what we call England, to best express under one name the Empire's unity - and a pride in her performance is an affair of but a few generations.. (1)

and he states that he has had to rely upon works of more modern production to complete his volume. This volume, however, was compiled during the period when imperialism was at its height, and is dedicated more to the blatant type of poetry than to the honest, sincere expressions of English pride of country.

Shakespeare, writing at the time of Elizabethan glory, expresses in many fine passages the nobility and aspirations of England, and there is a continual line of patriotic poems extending into the romantic period, which express fully and effectively some of the better qualities of English patriotic sentiment. The romantics drawing their tradition from the love of liberty stimulated by the French Revolution had a strong feeling for their country, and men like Byron and Shelley who were intensely critical were none the less aware of the good qualities of their native land. Wordsworth has many fine sonnets expressing faith in the nobler qualities of his country, and his sonnet London 1802 although not unworthy praise, strikes the tenour of liberality and aspiration which the romantics had towards their country:

> Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour,
> England hath need of thee; she is a fen
> Of stagnant waters; altar, sword and pen,
> Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower

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(1) Wedmore F., & Wedmore M., Poems of Love and Pride of England, p.vii.

Have forfeited their English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men
Oh! raise us up, return again
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power. (2)

Here is a wise combination of criticism and aspiration which touches one with a sense of the nobility of a country rather than the revulsion which comes from dishonest self-praise. The critical quality of the romantics and their broad ideals of universal liberty finds little expression in the imperial poetry of the later nineteenth century, although the emotional quality which predominated in the romantic movement is very much alive. The Byronic hero, the man of action, finds a place in the nineteenth century, and Henley, a fierce nationalist, and imperialist, has for his hero Byron.

Romanticism, however, influenced the imperialist movement from another direction, and that is through the forces of German Transcendentalism. Germany, like other nations, developed a strong national feeling, and much of her literature of the period of unification is romantic in nature and finds an association with the ancient myths and legends, especially of the hero. This was the doctrine which Carlyle absorbed, and which he impressed upon the English people.

As we have seen, the doctrine of materialism was predominant during the Victorian period, and it reflected itself in the writers. Many of these, especially Ruskin and Carlyle, were critical of this aspect of life, and sought to bring people back to a more spiritual view of life, although not through the regular channels of religion which seemed to be failing all around them. It was through this transcendentalism that Carlyle sought to cleanse people's souls, but it was not only in faith, but also in works. The doctrine of work became for Carlyle a means of salvation.

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(2) William Wordsworth, Poems, p.307

He had read the German authors, especially Goethe who, both in Faust and Wilhelm Meister signifies the hope of mankind to be in the spirit of industry, organization and civilization, and he suggests that the mission of Europe is to carry these things to the far corners of the earth. It was Carlyle who first caught the voice of Goethe in England, and he gave a spiritualized value to work and activity which later became embodied in the imperialist's love of action and zeal for doing things.

The hero worship which Carlyle advocated also found an application in the enthusiasm of the Victorians for empire-builders. This theory of the "heroes" when applied to the state could only result in one thing - the assumption of a sense of inequality between various countries, and this is exactly what did occur with imperialism. The idea of the chosen race saving the inferior savages became a strong justification for imperialist activities during the later part of the century.

In Past and Present, Carlyle pays tribute to the ideal of Empire when he says,

> Great honour to him whose epic is a melodious hexameter Illiad....But still greater honour, if his Epic be a mighty Series of Heroic Deeds.. (3)

and as far as Carlyle was concerned, nature was the great justifier of imperialism because she offered her secret store to England.

Added to this was Carlyle's conception of duty which he placed high in the ranks of human virtue. This undoubtedly drew its inspiration from the religious principles of the stern Scottish faith which was so deeply ingrained in Carlyle. Duty was a supreme responsibility and this virtue was extolled both in the national responsibility and in the personal life in the imperialistic scheme of things.

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(3) Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present, Book 3, Chap. 5, p.193

Unquestionably the influence of Carlyle worked on Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), either directly or indirectly through the social forces which reflected some of the ideals Carlyle cherished. Tennyson's long life extending almost from one end of the century to the next gave him an immense opportunity to absorb the changing aspects of the Victorian tradition, and that culturally he is the focal point of the age cannot be denied. It was the early poems of Tennyson which roused the slumbering imperialism, and although his conceptions of Empire were ahead of the people and their government, nevertheless he wielded considerable influence over their minds. Up until 1872 there had been little enthusiasm for imperialism, but a good deal of Tennyson's political poetry written earlier bears the imperial stamp.

Like the romantics, part of Tennyson's patriotism found its inspiration in the intense reverence for the past and for heroic deeds. His King Arthur poems, although not imperialistic, show this tendency. Unlike the romantics, however, in their broader international view, Tennyson was to a great extent insular, and his poetry finds its whole genesis in things English either in his own day or in the past, and he is always overawed by English character and achievement. Consequently the first article of Tennyson's political creed was that, "it is a great matter to be an Englishman". (4)

Although Tennyson published two short imperial poems in his volume of 1830, that were described as expressing patriotism "more noisy than dignified", (5) it was not until the middle of the century that his imperial muse began its real work. It was greatly stimulated by the rise to power in 1851 of Napoleon the Third through his unscrup-

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(4) Stephen Gwynn, Tennyson, p. 95.

(5) Ibid., p. 96.

-ulous coup d'etat. Tennyson felt that Napoleon was a threat to English liberty, and was also aroused by the rumours that the French were preparing to wage war against England and invade the country.

His poem Third of February 1852 is strongly hostile to the Napoleonic regime and is a vigorous and effective denunciation of the French. At the same time he makes an appeal to the heroic instincts in Englishmen by appealing to their heritage:

> I say we never feared! And as for these
> We broke them on land, we drove them on the seas (6)

The same thought is expressed in Britons Guard Your Own, a poem which appeared in the "Examiner" in 1852, where the poet cries out:

> We were the best of marksmen long ago,
> We won old battles with our strength the bow.
> Now practise yeoman,
> Like these bowmen
> Till your balls fly as their true shafts have flown
> Yeoman guard your own. (7)

Tennyson had not forgotten the military heritage of Waterloo nor the naval glory of Trafalgar, and it is in calling his countrymen to a new sense of their greatness that he makes his first imperial appeal.

Tennyson could not associate what was going on in France and other European countries with England which he saw as the one stabilizing force in world affairs. In his Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, he exclaims:

> O Statesman, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
> Of Europe, keep our noble England whole
> And save the one true seed of freedom sown. (8)

Tennyson had watched the long march of progress and success in English affairs - progress which had not only made the country rich in trade and wealth, but which had resulted in the great political reforms and the

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(6) Alfred Tennyson, Works, Vol.II, p.223

(7) Tennyson's Suppressed Poems, p.77

(8) Alfred Tennyson, Op. cit. Vol.II, p.216.

concrete development of democracy with all its attendant freedoms. Thus it was imperative upon England to defend these rights so that they might continue their own progress and see to it that other countries received the benefits.

> No little German state are we
> But the one voice of Europe; we must speak. (9)

He was conscious of England's destiny long before either people or leaders, and he felt sure that his country had a larger part to play in the affairs of Europe than her "splendid isolation" allowed her to do at that time.

Tennyson, however, was not satisfied to let his appeals remain in terms of liberty in an abstract way, but in these early days he sets the stage for the imperialism which was to appeal to the large masses. When Napoleon the Third's colonels began their invasion discussions, Lord Lansdowne made an appeal for a stronger imperial defence, and the so-called volunteer movement originated. It was this movement which stimulated Tennyson to write his poem, Rifleman Form. It appeared in the "Times" on May 9th, 1859, and it is not a particularly good piece of poetry, in company with a great deal of the patriotic poetry, but it demonstrates something, however, of the spirit of Kipling. Tennyson's chief theory here is the one held by the imperialists that Empire was more important than home reform, and he exclaims:

> Be not deaf to the sounds that warn!
> Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!
> Let your reforms for a moment go!
> Look to your butts and take good aim!
> Better a rotten borough or so
> Than a rotten fleet or a city in flames! (10)

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(9) Ibid. Vol. II, p.222

(10) Ibid. Vol. X, p.278

Furthermore, this poem incorporates the repetitive type of chorus which became the favourite of the later Victorian imperial enthusiasts:

> Form, form, Rifleman form
> Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
> Rifleman, rifleman, rifleman, form! (11)

The repeated chorus of a stirring nature appears several times in the poets' imperial poems, and the English War Song is a ringing challenge to the men of England with the question, "Who fears to die?" and the answering suggestion that all who do will suffer the "withering scorn of the many". It is the chorus, however, that strikes the note of emotional excitement:

> Shout for England!
> Ho for England!
> George for England!
> Merry England!
> England for aye! (12)

Nothing is more successful with large masses of people than the constant repitition of verses with rhythmic qualities, and undoubtedly the poets who wrote their swinging jaunty choruses contributed greatly to the national awakening of imperialism. Tennyson's poetry, however, failed to catch the people of his day because they were not sufficiently ready for the type of imperialism which Kipling glorified in jingo songs.

Tennyson's eye when it was on other parts of the world was usually watching for episodes of courage among Englishmen, and he sang with verve incidents which added to national honour. When England became embroiled in the fruitless and unnecessary struggle of the Crimean War with Russia, Tennyson's muse took up the cause, and it was under the stimulation of a military incident which would have normally disappeared

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(11) Ibid. Vol. X, p.279.

(12) Tennyson's Suppressed Poems, p.38

into obscurity that he wrote The Charge of the Light Brigade, with its famous philosophy of unreasoning duty which becomes the passion of the imperialist:

> Theirs not to make reply
> Theirs not to reason why
> Theirs but to do and die. (13)

It was this sternness of responsibility which Carlyle had so strongly stressed, and which found its stimulation in religious fervour, and which transferred its expression into the fanatical spirit of the English soldier whose greatest delight when imperialism was at its height was serving the Queen and performing heroic deeds in strange lands. Of necessity the glory of the English soldier was a part of the imperial scheme. Tennyson catches something of this feeling in the lines:

> When can their glory fade?
> O the wild charge they made!
> All the world wondered. (14)

Again, during the Indian Mutiny, Tennyson took advantage of the heroic defence of Lucknow by a mere handful of English soldiers, and he gave life to the adventurous spirit of their deeds in the minds of the English people. In the poem, Defence of Lucknow, he offers a picture of English character which certainly stirred the people who sat at home and listened with awe to strange and violent experiences happening to their friends and relatives in distant countries:

> Handful of Englishmen as we were, we were English
> in heart and limb,
> Strong with the strength of the race to command,
> to obey, to endure... (15)

The glorification of English character and a setting down of the qualities which it was supposed to possess contributed immeasurably towards Englishmen achieving these qualities, and such attributes as obeying,

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(13) Ibid., Vol. II, p.225.

(14) Ibid., Vol. II, p.227.

(15) Alfred Tennyson, Poetical Works, p.471.

enduring and commanding became the backbone of the militarism which supported the imperial cause.

Tennyson stood in strong opposition to those who would suggest the breaking up of Empire, and there is no doubt that his attitude was one which helped to deliver the final blow to the so-called "Little Englander", at least as far as his success politically with the people was concerned. As late as 1873, the "Times" had advised Canadians to take up their freedom as "the days of apprenticeship were over", and Tennyson saw this as an attempt to destroy the greatness of England's empire, and he takes strong objections to it in the poem To the Queen, where he says:

> And that true north, whereof we lately heard
> A strain to shame us, keep to yourselves;
> So loyal is too costly! Friends - your love
> Is but a burthen: loose the bonds and go!
> Is this the tone of Empire? Here the faith
> That made us rulers? (16)

This poem had a great influence among Canadians, and Lord Dufferin, then Governor-General of Canada, wrote from Rideau Hall at Ottawa to Tennyson, thanking him for his poem, reassuring him that it had done much to repair the damage done by the "Times". Thus Tennyson's influence as an Imperial poet extended, not unlike Kipling's outside the bounds of England itself, and as in England, helped to form in the minds of the people a more concrete attitude towards the question of Empire. Although it did not stir up the same reaction as Kipling's did, it did disturb the sleeping emotions which political platforms alone could not do, and it certainly helped prepare the way for what Tennyson himself described as "ever-broadening empire".

It is clear that Tennyson was conscious of the growing interest in Empire, and it has been suggested that probably even more than Kip-

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(16) Alfred Tennyson, Works, Vol. III, p.395

-ling he did much to stimulate both people and statesmen to the meaning of Empire. Kipling came at a time when the people were enthusiastic about imperialism, but Tennyson found both people and leaders often opposed to his ideas although the issue of the Crimean War brought out a good deal of imperial sentiment, and something of a jingo attitude.

Nevertheless, Tennyson kept warning the people about the dangers to English security and calling them to the idea of Empire as security. In the poem Hands All Round, published in 1852 in the Examiner, Tennyson offers a toast to

> ....all loyal hearts who long
> To keep our English Empire whole! (17)

and long before Disraeli's time Tennyson had spoken the words which were to be the great statesman's guiding policies:

> To all our statesmen so they be
> True leaders of the land's desire!
> To both our houses may they see
> Beyond the borough and the shire! (18)

Tennyson is strongly opposed to the fear which he sees among the people and their leaders about taking up the challenge of Empire. His confidence in England made him despise those who underestimated England's greatness of national character, and he passionately exclaims:

> Pray God our greatness may not fail
> Thro' craven fears of being great. (19)

Tennyson felt that England was unaware of its greatness and he was right, but it was not for him to bring that full awareness, and in an age when people were not on the whole imperially minded, he says almost hopelessly in one of his poems:

> ...one isle, one isle
> That knows not her own greatness. (20)

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(17) Alfred Tennyson, op. cit., Vol. VIII, p.139.

(18) Ibid., Vol. VIII, p.140.

(19) Ibid., Vol. VIII.p. 140.

(20) Ibid., To the Queen, Vol. III, p.396.

It is necessary to realize that although public opinion was not so enthusiastic on behalf of imperialism during the early years of Tennyson's life, that political interest was very much alive. As a matter of fact, it was the aroused public interest in political affairs that made possible the spreading of the imperialist doctrines. The issues arising out of the Crimean War were undoubtedly ones which brought out more clearly than ever before the interest of the people in the affairs of their nation, and they also gave Tennyson an opportunity to strike home with some of his imperial ideas.

This public interest found its source chiefly in the newspapers which were beginning to play an important part in the spreading of information, and in the moulding of the nation's ideas and aims. An excellent example of this is the part played by the"London Times" in the nation's affairs at this period.

It was during the year of 1854-1855 that the "Times" rose to the zenith of its powers as a political influence,and it was said at this time that it could make and unmake governments. This is partially true because it was the newspaper's attitude towards the bungling in the Crimean War which contributed to the downfall of the Palmerston government. The "Times" not only encouraged public opinion towards the policy of defeating the Russians on Russian soil,but when the terrible mismanagement of the affairs of the war was revealed by W.H.Russel, an outstanding reporter who was in the Crimea, the "Times" succeeded in arousing strong, almost vehement anger in the nation over the events of the war.

The incompetence of the generals in the field and the government at home was glaringly revealed in the pages of the "Times", and there can be no doubt that the newspaper's condemnatory attitude helped the English middle class to oust the hereditary nobility from important

positions both in the army and in the government. Also it succeeded in making the people more aware of England's position in the affairs of the nations, and in animating a strong desire for a more powerful England, both militarily and politically.

Not all of the people nor leaders were anxious for war with Russia, and many thousands felt it unjust. Men like Cobden and Bright were opposed to it as unnecessary and unchristian, while men like Palmerston held it to be the only way to restore the glory of England.

It was through this welter of divided opinion and heated argument that Tennyson launched his poem Maud, with its morbid hero suffering from the blighting influence of a speculative age, expounding ideas which were received by many enthusiastically and by others with indignation and disgust. He sees the end of the the peaceful era and a turning away from the trade and commerce which has been the 'all-in-all' of the English:

> No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
> Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note. (21)

He does not look on the coming of war as a great catastrophe, but rather as a purging element in the national life, and he rejoices,

> Hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd. (22)

Tennyson looks upon the struggle as a means of cleansing away the corruption which long peace has brought to England, including the terrible conditions of the poor, and the greed where "each hand lusting for all that is not its own" is raised against its neighbours.

> ...better war! loud war by land and sea,
> War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones. (23)

Added to this expression of militarism was Tennyson's hatred of the Russians against whom the Crimean War was aimed. Here he enters into the field of international politics, where both Britain and Russia

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(21) Alfred Tennyson, Works, Edited by Hallam Lord Tennyson, Vol. IV, p.228
(22) Ibid., Vol., IV, p.229
(23) Ibid., Vol., IV, p.149

were playing imperialistic power politics, and he says of Czar Nicholas:

Yet God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar. (24)

Considering the causes which led to the war, it seems rather pretentious on the part of the poet to make England the trustee of God's wrath, but this was to be a very important part of the imperial scheme - the idea of the nation as the special missionary of God. The essential differences which engendered the war was, of course, the question as to whether the Russians were to be allowed to exercise protection over the oppressed Christian populations of Turkey. Both France and England opposed this because they were unwilling to see the Turkish Empire interfered with, as both of them considered it important to have a strong Turkey to protect their Middle East interests. Under these circumstances it would seem that Tennyson had allowed himself to be led into the type of attitude which great numbers of the imperial singers adopted - that ideal of "my country right or wrong". This, combined with the idea of God's special dispensations stimulated the doctrine of "Destiny", which was to become such an important part of imperialism.

Tennyson moreover, hailed the struggle as a means of bringing renown to the name of England, as so many of the imperialistically minded politicians proclaimed it would. This too, however, was to suffer a sad blow in the actual war, when the incompetency and stupidity of the military leaders destroyed reputations, and instead of fulfilling Tennyson's prediction that:

...many a darkness into the light will leap
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names. (25)

it was exactly the reverse, and the only military name of note to come out of the war was that of Todleben, the Russian.

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(24) Ibid., Vol. IV, p.229

(25) Ibid., Vol. IV. p.229

For Tennyson, the commercial life had become debased in its misuse of its powers, and he sees the terrible struggle for gold as worse than the war itself, as he says:

> Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
> The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword. (26)

He hoped that the war would cleanse this corruption, but again the real facts proved different. Instead of cleansing, it simply accentuated it more flagrantly, and revealed the rottenness of the whole military and political system. During the war, the sufferings of the soldiers at Sebastopol and other towns is sufficient proof of this. The tailors had sold them shoddy and worthless garments - the army contractors had furnished them with meat which could not be eaten, and thousands died miserably at the hospital at Scutari because of lack of medicine or the uselessness of what they did have. Twenty-four thousand Englishmen died to uphold the power of the Turk in Europe, and one of the most notable actions in the whole thing was the work of Florence Nightingale and her nurses. This then, was the war which the hero of Maud had hailed as the redemption of England, and Lord Palmerston, as the means of renewing the glory of the country.

It is notable that there was not in the English people the same driving spirit and spiritual force which had sent them to victory against Napoleon when their sacrifices had brought out the sturdier qualities of English character. It is strange to note that the next major war - the Boer War, produced the same incompetency and lack of true spirit, and its flame was fed on a transient jingo enthusiasm. Perhaps the consciousness of the injustice of these causes subconsciously revolted the English character, and the lack of vigour was due to the lack of a true sincerity of purpose.

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(26) Ibid., Vol.IV, p.147

Tennyson's belief in the rightness of the English cause at the Crimea was in keeping with that of thousands of his countrymen, who with him could say:

...I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true.(27)

and his poem made them believe that this was what the nation needed to shake its sloth and put an end to the faith in comfort and national well-being to which long peace and safety,trade and money-making had brought. Undoubtedly next to the "Times", Tennyson was a great influence in buoying up the spirits of those who sought to advance the imperial cause, and the whole Crimean struggle and its attendant events left the nation conscious of its own needs and powers. Many were strongly opposed to the poem, among them Gladstone, who condemned its warlike attitude, but whatever the outcome of its words, it was a work which exerted a strong influence and assisted in the development of an imperial and military consciousness, and helped to contribute to the part which Gwynn attributes to Tennyson, that of pouring "iron into the hearts of his race". (28)

Tennyson's interests as Poet Laureate often necessitated the writing of poems of special dedication, and it was in many of these that he celebrated the commercial power of England. Tennyson,after the Crimean War changed his tune about commerce and in keeping with the national worship of trade, he proclaimed it as a means of salvation to the world, and expresses his pride in it and its relation to Empire in a poem dedicated to the fiftieth Jubilee in 1887 when he exults in

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
Fifty years of ever-broadening Science!
Fifty years of ever-broadening Empire! (29)

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(27) Ibid., Vol. IV, p.228.

(28) Stephen Gwynn, Tennyson, A Critical Study, p.102.

(29) Tennyson, Works, Vol. VIII, p.273.

His whole imperial vision, however, is summed up in the poem Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, in which he welcomes the sons and brothers of Empire and all the vast produce which they had brought with them, and in a stirring voice calls to them:

> Sons, be welded each and all,
> Into one imperial whole,
> One with Britain heart and soul!
> One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!
> Britains hold your own. (30)

This was Tennyson's great vision of Empire, and he lived to see the nation become with him one in heart and soul in its imperial ambitions. Tennyson is represented as the great symbol of Victorian poetry, and in his imperial poetry this is no less true. His unusually long life carried him through the years when imperial aspirations were low almost to the threshold of the hectic imperialism of the late nineties, and he made a much greater contribution to the rise of imperial forces than is generally conceded to him. As Gwynn comments,

> He was jealous of his country's greatness, and he preached a wise imperialism in days before the nation at large had realized the conditions under which it held its ascendancy. (31)

Whether we consider it a "wise imperialism" is a question of debate, but that he preached it when the nation was not yet ready to receive it is unquestioned, and that he helped to lay the foundations for it is undeniable.

Tennyson never tired of singing the ideal of freedom which he believed England stood for. We have seen his hatred of Napoleon, and of the Czar, on the assumption that they were a threat to the free way of life in England. Much of his poetry of patriotic imperialism strikes

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(30) Ibid. Vol.VIII, p.149.

(31) Stephen Gwynn, Op. cit. p.98.

this note, and his justification for singing the praises of England is because of the great service she has rendered in the cause of freedom wherever she went.

Even in his most bombastic poems such as the National Song, where he exclaims:

> There is no land like England
> Where'er the light of day be;
> There are no hearts like English hearts
> Such hearts of oak as they be,

his chorus expresses an underlying pride in the freedom of England:

> Our glory is our freedom,
> We lord it o'er the sea;
> We are the sons of freedom
> We are the free. (32)

and with the chaos and disruption in Europe and the dictatorships of the Czar and Napoleon in his mind, it is no wonder that he cries:

> Come along! we alone of the earth are free! (33)

Like the true poet, Tennyson loved freedom and saw England's task as the bringing about of a free world. In the poem Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington there is something of that fuller vision expressed which goes out beyond the insular patriotism which he so often celebrated. He speaks to the people of England about Wellington saving their freedom and adds:

> For saving that,
> ye helped to save mankind,
> Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
> And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
> Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just. (34)

Wellington's task had not been for England alone, but inevitably must lead to a greater world of freedom and sanity.

In any study of Tennyson's imperial poetry the strong prophetic strain which existed in the poet cannot be overlooked, for it is here

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(32) Tennyson's Suppressed Poems, p.40

(33) Ibid, p.38

(34) Alfred Tennyson, Poetical Works, p.225

where the broader vision pierces the narrowness of his Victorian outlook and reveals the great moments of inspiration in which the poet saw the world rather than England alone. Tennyson was aware of the spiritual forces at work among the nations as well as the material forces, and at times he can look into these beyond empires and thrones, and ask

> When the schemes and all the sceptres,kingdoms
> and republics fall,
> Something kindlier,higher,holier -all for each
> and each for all ? (35)

This is the eternal spiritual bond which draws men together from all corners of the earth and brings with it "Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue." (36)

Tennyson certainly sang the poetry of insularity and often bombast, but in his greater moments it seems that he was conscious of it, and a verse from Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, seems pertinent:

> I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
> Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble
> at last. (37)

Whatever may be said of Tennyson's contribution to a narrow and blatant imperialism, it would seem that it is part of the compromise which he made to his age and not his final vision which is far greater and far more significant. It is the vision to which we aspire today, and which lives although the great bulk of his imperial poetry has been forgotten - the inspiring lines:

> Till the war drum throbb'd no longer,
> and the battle flags were furl'd
> In the parliament of man, the Federation
> of the world. (38)

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(35) Ibid. Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, p.521.

(36) Ibid.p.521.

(37) Ibid.p.517.

(38) Ibid. Locksley Hall, p.93.

Chapter Three

The Minor Imperial Poets Before 1875

One of the phenomena of the Victorian age, particularly from the middle of the century to the end was the appearance of an almost unbelievable number of lesser poets. Poetry had been mainly the interest of a limited number of people, but during these years the poet became an important figure even to the great masses. Many critics of the period doubted the value of that appreciation. A good example is presented in an essay by Walter Pater on the death and funeral of Tennyson, where the critic was overcome by seeing the vast thousands lining the streets in homage to the dead poet. Pater wondered how deep the feeling of that great throng went, and concluded that very few of them could admit to a fundamental love of poetry.

It would seem reasonable to assume that the association of the poets with so many issues of the day which were closely related to public interest had brought them close to the great mass of the people. Again, the drama was at a low ebb in England, and the reading public found that their poetry tended to be dramatic in its presentation of the activities of the nation in world affairs, social questions and problems of religion and science. Every age needs its emotional outlet, its heroes and someone on whom to lavish its attentions. In this age the literary men as well as the politicians and the military were the objects of interest and adulation.

Inasmuch as this interest tended to produce a great number of readers, likewise it produced a greater number of writers, and in proportion a greater number of poets. This is especially true in the field of imperialism, and although many of these poets are far from first class writers, it is essential to examine their work if we are to gain a per-

-spective in the appreciation of the mutual influence which the people had on the poets and the poets on the people.

As might well be expected, a good deal of the poetry written by these lesser figures was stimulated by the great events of the day such as those which influenced Tennyson, but at the same time there were expressions of sentiments which drew their appeal from English national qualities and character and not only from events.

One of the most important of the minor poets, Gerald Massey (1828-1907), shows not only the imperialist spirit, but also a vigour and colour which mark him as an effective poet. His writing, like that of most minor poets, reveals a considerable number of inconsistencies and lapses, but his strong and robust realism gives power to his work, and at the same time offers a good method for the outlet of his imperial feelings.

Massey is an example of the fact that imperialist enthusiasts were not all men of the privileged class, and that interest in imperialism extended from the highest to the lowest in the social scale, Massey was born the son of a canal boatman, and lived in utter poverty for years. He had little formal education, and went to work in the factory system at an early age for abominable wages. Eventually, through hard work and a strong vision, Massey reached London and gained some recognition as a poet. His greatest ideal was to work on behalf of the poor, and his poetic creed is expressed in such aspirations as yearning to raise the people into "lovable beings" and to "elevate the standards of humanity for all" (1). Massey, however, for some time became swept into the imperial tide by the colourful heroisims

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(1) J. Churton Collins, The Nestor of Living English Poets Contemporary Review, Vol.LXXXV, p.734.

of the military in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Massey was an inevitable realist. He looked squarely at the problems of the day, especially the social questions, and he presented them with frankness and courage as well as in forcible language.

Such attributes were well suited to the task of an imperial singer, and during the Russian War, Massey proved himself to be a veritable tower of strength both in expressing the heroisms of the soldier, and in keeping up the moral of those left behind. His poetry possesses much more personal feeling than that of Tennyson, who concentrated on man in the mass and on the larger issues at stake. Massey, however, with his great concern about humanity, seeks to enter into the soul of those suffering from loss through death of a loved one in battle, and he seeks to make them feel that the sacrifice has not been in vain. The inculcation of such an ideal into people certainly is a very important part of obtaining their support, especially in a cause like imperialism, where violent sacrifice was demanded. His lack of ability, however, to bring out the tragic, reduces many of these poems to 'tear-jerkers' rather than poems of great value, and it is in the colourful exterior show of militarism and imperialism where he best expresses himself.

In the poem A War Winter's Night in England there is a picture of fortitude and patience drawn in a group of people awaiting tensely in their homes for the news of battle. To pass the hours these brave souls

> ...talk of Britain's glory,
> ...sing some brave old song,
> Or tell the thrilling story
> Of her wrestles with the Wrong. (2)

and the proud English mother in Glimpses of War sings proudly:

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(2) Gerald Massey, Poetical Works, p.252

Oh brave is my Donald and gallant and gay
He'll flash through the fight in the wild
bloody day;
He'll crest the high waves upon Valour's
red sea;
God shield him! God send him back safely
to me. (3)

The poet's understanding goes out to the maiden whose beloved has gone off to do his duty in battle for his country's honour, and in a very fine verse the poet meditates

Ah me! How many a Maiden -
Will wake 'o nights to find
Her tree of life, love laden,
Swept bare in this wild wind! (4)

These lines do not in themselves express directly the sentiment of English glory and imperialism, but they do give an insight into the people, and as imperialism became so inextricably bound up with life, almost every aspect of human emotion and feeling bore directly upon the attitude which the people assumed. This type of verse brought home to people ideas which, when bared of their sentiment, helped to make imperialism possible - there is the pride and confidence in the English soldier; there is England wrestling with the wrong; there are the thoughts of Britain's glory - all of these things which consolidated the emotions of the people and made possible the later rampant imperialism.

His imperial poetry is more directly shown in the work where he sings the glory of the soldier. In this respect Massey outshines Tennyson, especially in the colourful living pictures of the fighting men in action. His stirring words and remarkable pictorial powers bring to life something of the admiration for pomp, and the love of fighting which was to be so much a part of the imperial scheme. These lines stir the imagination and inflame the emotions. They are filled with

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(3) Ibid., p.250

(4) Ibid., p.254

a patriotic pride and military excitement which probably made many Victorians feel with the poet when he said of the thrill of watching soldiers ride to war:

> All made me tingle with a triumph of life,
> And I could weep that I am left behind. (5)

Massey gave the Victorian reader concrete pictures of emotions they knew, in such scenes as the "gay Hussars" riding off to war with the "light of triumph sparkling in their eyes" and the "bickering bayonets" fluttering while:

> War-steeds sweeping men to battle going -
> Singing the freeman's songs of the fatherland -
> The banners with old battle memories stirred -
> .....
> The thrilling Pibroch, and the wild war drum,
> The stern sword-music of our grand Hurrah
> And answering cheer for death or victory. (6)

There is no direct appeal in Massey's poems for military recruits, but his love of the pomp of war was probably enough in itself to march many a man into the ranks of the Crimean heroes.

The vigour of Massey's battle scenes leave the spirit tingling as he writes about the gay abandon which the soldier was supposed to possess,

> O the wild joy of the Warriors going to die,
> All Sword and all Flame with our brows lifted high!
> Ride on, happy hand, for the glory swims nigh,
> Old England forever! Hurrah! (7)

Massey revels in the gory pictures of bloodshed and action. In this less sensitive age the brutalities of war were taken for granted and were often openly displayed. It was not unusual to have pictures drawn in the magazines of Russian soldiers impaled upon British lances, and even pictures of the battered torn bodies of the British dead. The feeling of pride in sacrifice had by no means reached its full prime, but the poets were giving life to the ideal, and as imperialism widened,

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(5) Ibid., p.232

(6) Ibid., p.233

(7) Ibid., p.238

life became cheaper and cheaper. Massey glorifies the bloody actions of war on behalf of an imperial England:

> Spring to now! Dash thro' now! and cleave crest and crown!
> For each foe round you strewn now, a wreath of renown!
> In a red rain of sabres ride down, dash them down,
> Old England forever! Hurrah! (8)

There is the sense of the unconquerable English spirit which was abroad in such lines as:

> Charge back! once again we must ride the death ride,
> You Victor few smiling in terrible pride!
> Charge home! smoking hell of horse, grim, glorified!
> Old England forever! Hurrah! (9)

It is the careless abandon and the fanatical joy of the primitive warrior that Massey delights in as he sings:

> For death, how merry they mount and ride!
> Those swords look keen for their lap of gore! (10)

and he records the "warrior's glorious anger" as in the just cause they cry

> We are nobly made to smite!
> No dalliance, save with Hate hold we,
> Where Life and Death keep bloody tryst,
> And all the red Reality
> Reels on us through a murder-mist! (11)

and forge onward to crush the autocrats and despisers of liberty, as

> Wave upon wave rolls ruins flood
> And the hosts of the Tyrant melt in blood. (12)

To the reader of our day this might appear almost fantastic in its ferocity and exhibitionism of bloodthirstiness, as it is our policy today, except in the case of propaganda, to avoid displaying the horrors of war. The purging of the national character of the ideal that war is a thing to be glorified is something which never occured to the Victorians. To the Victorian lover of action, this was the glory of Eng-

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(8) Ibid., p.239.

(9) Ibid., p.239.

(10) Ibid., p.252.

(11) Ibid., p.253.

(12) Ibid., p.253.

-land at its height, and inasmuch as there was no other person who was so much the man of daring action as the soldier and the sailor, these became the symbols of manliness at its best. Undoubtedly this attitude contributed greatly to the rise of the imperial feeling, as many could say with Massey of the fighting men:

> How they run the race of glory! How they light
> these darkened years! (13)

Massey, like Tennyson, does not omit to express his pride in England; all that the warrior does is for England; and all the sacrifice the people make is made for England. This to Massey is as it should be, and he feels heavily the sense of responsibility which people owe to the state. In the poem England Goes to Battle he hails his fellowmen:

> Who would not fight for England?
> Who would not fling a life
> I' the ring, to meet a Tyrant's gage,
> And glory in the strife. (14)

It is in such poems as these that Massey approaches the ideals and jingoism which made Kipling famous, and it is his message to proclaim:

> But there's no land like England,
> Wherever that land may be
> Of all the world 'tis kingland
> Crown'd by its bride, the sea!
> And they shall rest i' the balmiest bed
> Who battle for it and bleed for it!
> And they shall be head of the Glorious Dead
> Who die in the hour of need for it. (15)

To Massey, England was a supreme and understanding nation among other nations and he feels pride in her superior position:

> There she sits in her Island-home,
> Peerless among her Peers,
> And Humanity oft to her arms doth come
> To ease its poor heart of tears. (16)

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(13) Ibid. p.237

(14) Ibid. p.151

(15) Ibid. p.254 - A War Winter's Night in England

(16) Ibid. p.76 - Old England

There might be some justification for the last two lines, when one considers the great number of political exiles who continually flocked to London for refuge. The ever-broadening triumphs which democracy had scored in the Reform acts gave England an important place in the eyes of those in other countries who were fighting for freedom against a succession of tyrants. Historically, English democracy at this time was far from being fully developed, but the method by which the English people brought about changes in their political system impressed those who were seeking to establish a more representative type of government. Outside of a few minor revolts, England made their changes peaceably, while on the continent governments rose and fell in a turbulence of bloodshed. England became for many, the leader in the fight for freedom and almost always proved a welcoming neighbour to those who sought refuge from persecution. Men like Kossuth and Mazzini found refuge in England and strong encouragement both from leaders and people. Equally these political refugees kept the struggle and ideal of freedom before the eyes of the Englishmen who began to see their country as a lone island of democracy and freedom in a sea of oppressive tyranny. Inevitably, the poets expressed this feeling in their work, and it was partially on this attitude that the imperial mission was justified with England playing Sir Galahad of liberty to the ignorant and oppressed.

Massey, like Tennyson, justifies England's political and military actions on this mission of freedom, and he says proudly:

> She shall dash Freedom's foes adown Death's bloody slope;
> For there's life in the Old Land yet. (17)

Massey demanded from his country the highest before he would give his assent to her actions, and he reveals this when celebrating the victory over Russia:

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(17) Ibid., p.76

Now, victory to our England!
And where'er she lifts her hand
In Freedom's fight, to rescue Right,
God bless the dear old land. (18)

The poet, like most of his generation was convinced that the Crimean War was a just struggle. Unfortunately the nobler qualities of freedom and justice have often been prostituted to causes of commercial and political gain, and Massey failed to see that this was the case with the Crimean War. Like Tennyson he saw England "...brightening through the battle smoke", but he was doomed to disillusionment although his stronger belief in the baftle of autocracy versus freedom no doubt compensated as well as the heroic deeds of the English soldiers.

Massey is also aware of "....some blind groping after a nobler life", and he associates the struggle with spiritual forces. God becomes a special force behind the English soldier, a guiding hand. In the poem Alma Hill he expresses this idea:

The spirits of our fathers still
Stand up in battle by us
And in our need on Alma Hill
The Lord of Hosts was nigh us. (19)

Of all the ages in England's history, no one needed so much moral justification as the Victorians, especially in the earlier decades of the century. The English conscience is a strange thing; it cannot seem to bear the realities of what it sees, and if it cannot eliminate it must justify. Both the church and the aristocracy saw the poverty and misery, and were aware of the vast differences in the standard of living. They also saw the worship of the material, especially wealth. The materialism of the age seemed to disturb the Englishman, and he created a Pharisaical religion which justified his actions before the God which no

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(18) Ibid., p.152.

(19) Ibid., p.236.

Englishman could forsake, but would not scruple to adjust to his needs, and which made calling upon God to assist his ends whether good or bad a perfectly respectable practice.

This scheme of things was ultimately transferred to the political and national life, and cropped up in the later years of imperialism. It gave the sensitive souls of the poets - which were not too sensitive in the worst of the imperial years - a justification for the sacrifice of their muse to materialism. As long as people were convinced that God was on their side, they could continue to break His laws. It never occurred to the Victorian that the conception of a nationalistic God was inconsistent with the Almighty's universality, but it was not the job of the Victorian theologian to point that out, but rather to justify the conditions which existed and make the most of them - this was part of what has been termed the Victorian compromise. Thus the New Jehovah comes to the aid of the New Children of Israel, and Massey vaguely expresses this in such lines as:

> Down thro' the battle-cloud reaches a Hand
> To crown all who die for their own dear land. (20)

This verse has much in common with a great deal of the imperial verse which was appearing at this time, written by other minor poets. Richard C. Trench, a clergyman whom Wilberforce described as having "a soldier's heart under his cassock" (21), in a poem called Inkerman, in celebration of the well-known battle, speaks of the quiet Sabbath day at home in England where people trod "the customary paths of peace" while the soldiers hunted each other in the dark ravines, and he concludes that

> Our Sabbath setting side by side with yours,
> Yours was the better and the nobler day.... (22)

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(20) Ibid. p.238

(21) The Academy, Richard C. Trench, Vol.XXIX, p.236

(22) Richard C. Trench, Poems, p.253

Francis T. Palgrave, well known in his own day, reiterates forcefully the idea in a poem The Soldier's Battle, when he proclaims the English soldier unafraid because he knows that:

> ...God would rate each shattered limb
> Death torn for England's sake
> And in Christ's own mercy take
> On the day when the souls wake
> Their souls to Him. (23)

Massey himself cries out in the spirit of victory much the same notion:

> To the mighty Mother England came the radiant Victory
> With Laurels red and a bitter cup like Christ's last
> agony. (24)

No doubt all this appears presumptuous, but no more presumptuous than an age which felt that it had scaled the heights in all fields, and whose self-satisfied attitude bespoke the limited vision of many of its people.

Burdett quotes a chronicler of the age as describing the typical congregation as one which "would be equally horrified at hearing Christianity doubted or at seeing it practised". (25) This might be considered a rather severe cynicism, but it does sum up the hypocritical attitude which existed at that time. It is often difficult for one age to comprehend the other. In the first place, we tend to see only what we want to see in other ages, and consequently miss some of the fundamental differences which exist in thinking and attitude, and in the second place, we are unable to judge the similarities between our own age and others because of a lack of an objective view about ourselves. The underlying religious hypocrisy present in the Victorians is present with us, but the important outward difference is that there is a more honest rejection of religion than the Victorians could ever bring themselves to make.

Massey's imperialism is inextricably bound up with his interest in the people of England, and he undoubtedly has a broader ideal than his

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(23) Francis T. Palgrave, The Visions of England, p.162

(24) Gerald Massey, op. cit., p.248

(25) Osbert Burdett, The Beardsley Period, p.45

imperial poetry shows. As is the case with most minor poets, Massey lacked depth, and consequently fails to impress with any lasting value. He was the poet of an age in which human suffering was associated with slums, vicious industrial exploitation; and coming from that environment himself, he had a desire to teach people to rise above it. There is some suggestion that his imperial songs which were born mostly out of the Crimean War, could make some contribution to the people's emancipation. Freedom was a prerequisite to that emancipation, and England as a nation must first be free before the people could. There is, however, no fully expressed conviction on this point. Whatever the reason for his imperial verses he had less cause than most poets to sing them, because England had given him nothing but hardships and bitter struggle in his personal life. Nevertheless, he sings blatantly, colourfully and forcibly, if not artistically.

At the outset he appears to have lacked the intellectual foresight and the intuitive capacity of the great poet, and instead of expressing a wider sense of the freedom of man, his imperialistic poetry remains on the passionate expression of arrogant militarism counterbalanced by a sentimentalism about human suffering. He leaves no larger vision of the nature of Tennyson's aspirations for humankind, and one of his own lines sums up the value of his imperial verse, - "A sound to set the blood on fire, and warm the shivering soul". (26)

Although Massey lived on into the twentieth century, his poetic muse dried up at an early age, and all of his imperial poetry was written before imperialism reached its height. It is surprising that little was heard from him during the halcyon days of imperialism, but perhaps

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(26) Gerald Massey, op.cit., p.244

disillusionment with the failure of England to rid herself of poverty and social differences silenced him into a resigned state.

A critic of the day, in discussing the minor poets, remarked that "if they will be heard they must be in fashion". (27) It might be safe to say to be in fashion meant being a minor poet, because of the great number of localised issues which found their way into verse, and because of the great number of poets now doomed to obscurity who sang about them, and in their time, caught up the spirit of the mass of the people by writing what they wanted to hear.

Among these was a woman, Eliza Cook (1818-1889), who was extremely popular with the half-educated. Inasmuch as this class formed the bulk of the population who were being won over to imperialism, it is important to examine the nature of her work. Her verse had a rhythmic doggerel swing, and her sentiments were for the most part banal, and the expression trite and colourless. It might not be too much to suggest, however, that this type of poetry had an overwhelming appeal to the type of audience which judges poetry as best when it rhymes and is half-singing. The Victorian age was a vociferous age, and the phenomenon of the music-hall attests to the love of rowdyism and singing which the lower breed of Englishmen enjoyed. Thus such 'poetry' as Miss.Cook turned out found a ready audience as the preface to the volume of her complete works suggests.

She was not concerned with great political issues or universal values about freedom and truth. Her songs were simple and often puerile expressions of English ships, the men who sail them, the flag they serve and the country it represents. In the poem, Our Sailors and Our

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(27) E. K. Chambers, Review of the Poems of Mr. Palgrave, The Academy, Vol.XLIII, p.29.

Ships, she exclaims that "God and our Right!" are the first words on English lips, but the next are "Old England's Flag, our sailors and our Ships". (28) She seems to have been one of the earliest of the imperial singers who announces the relationship of the sea to England - at least among the nineteenth century poets. In the poem The English Ship by Moonlight expresses this:

> The wind just breathing to unroll
> A flag that bears no stain,
> Proud ship, that need'st no other scroll
> To warrant thy right on the main. (29)

She was no doubt instrumental in bringing a consciousness of naval affairs which had been sadly neglected after the enthusiasm of Trafalgar. She seeks to give a personal touch to her treatment of the men of the navy, but fails. An example is the poem The Gallant English Tar in which she extolls the sailor as "Britain's boast", and although "...he plays the ass on shore, he's the lion of the sea". (30).

It is her poems to the flag, however, which strike the most effective imperial note in her poetry. The poems are third rate, but the sentiment they express is one which contributed towards the almost religious worship of the Union Jack which the imperialist practised, and she helps to set the stage in the minds of her followers for this feeling. The poem The Englishman expresses pride in her country being the "first on the scroll of fame" and the "star of the earth", and then concludes about the flag:

> And that flag may sink with a shot torn wreck,
> But never float over a slave,
> Its honour is stainless, deny it who can;
> And this is the flag of an Englishman. (31)

Again, the poem especially dedicated to the flag called The Flag of the Free proclaims it as the "fairest unfurl'd o'er the land or the sea",

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(28) Eliza Cook, Poetical Works, p.145

(29) Ibid. p.46

(30) Ibid. p.50

(31) Ibid. p.68

then flings out a challenge to Englishmen:

> Be 'Justice' the war-shout and dastard is he
> Who would scruple to die 'neath the Flag of the Free. (32)

All other flags do a right obeisance to the English flag in the poem, England, as the poet gazes on:

> ...our open port where commerce mounts her throne,
> Where every flag that comes e'er now has lowered
> to our own. (33)

She strikes a rather interesting attitude towards commerce in the words "e'er now"; perhaps the uncertainty of English commercial supremacy stimulated the modifying words.

There is an undercurrent in her poetry which, although feeble, is nevertheless there, of the ideal of freedom, and as a possession of the English people. Her poem Hurrah for our Riflemen illustrates the ideal of the English soldier fighting for freedom as she says of them:

> But be sure they'll be dyed a blood-red through and through
> Ere the chain of the Despot shall bind them. (34)

Eliza Cook's poetry is not poetry of quality, but she drew her inspiration from her country and taught the people pride in their flag and their country. Her tone is colourless, devoid of everything except a mild jingo-rhythm, but she could nevertheless claim a wide popularity, and it is not surprising that in an age when Englishmen were discovering their Empire, that she could find an audience for such sentiment as:

> For a glorious charter, deny it who can,
> Is breathed in the words, 'I'm an Englishman!' (35)

The last of the more important of the minor poets who wrote under

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(32) Ibid. p.141

(33) Ibid. p.91

(34) Ibid. p.563

(35) Ibid. p.69

the stimulation of the rising imperialism was Sidney Dobell (1824-1874). Like Tennyson, Dobell saw the struggle with Russia in terms of autocracy versus freedom, and his more martial poems sprang from this feeling. Dobell realizes the deeper meaning behind the struggle with Russia, and in his poem Czar Nicholas in which he attacks the Russian monarch, he says:

> We could not turn from the colossal foe,
> The morning shadow of whose hideous head
> Darkened the furthest west, and who did throw
> His evening shade on Ind. (36)

There had always been the fear in the British leaders' minds that Russia would reach India, and such minor struggles as the Afghanistan affair was aimed at securing outposts to defend India. One of "Punch's" favourite cartoons was a picture of a fierce looking lion prowling among the rocks of the Afghanistan hills with a warning underneath, "On Guard".

Aside from a poem like Cavalry Charge at Balaclava, Dobell's poetry does not rant in ferocious colour like Massey's. He is more interested in the emotions of the people, and his poetry is often a simple story of a mother desperately seeking to know if her sailor boy is safe; in such a poem as How's My Boy, the worried mother says:

> What care I for the ship, sailor,
> I was never aboard her?
> Be she afloat or be she aground
> Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
> Her owners can afford her!
> I say, how's my John? (37)

Dobell, in some respects like Massey, treats with the emotions of the people in time of crisis. It might be interesting to note that as imperial fervour grows this strain disappears from the patriotic and national poetry. A callousness developed over the idea of Empire which made people less sympathetic, and the emphasis turned to the glory of sacrifice and the heroism of noble deeds. Human feelings were swamped

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(36) Sidney Dobell, Poetical Works, Vol. I, p.230

(37) Ibid. Vol. I, p.266

in the larger feeling and gave expression to itself only in terms of parades, spectacles of cheering and celebration, cheifly over Empire. It was a Pagliacci type of attitude - the show must go on despite the tears which must be hid if man is to prove himself a man. The later imperialist poetry exhibits this to the extreme.

Dobell's poem A Health to the Queen reveals his jingoistic strain in a rather significant way. The poem is written in the idea of a letter sent to him by his aunt in which she discusses the war, and says "...I don't know why we're going to fight" and the poet agrees that "she's sure I don't know and I'm sure she's quite right". This is followed by a raucous chorus of the Kipling type, suggesting that it does not matter the reason for the war:

> Tantara! tantara! I haven't, 'pon my soul!
> Soho, blow trumpeter,
> Trumpeter, trumpeter!
> Soho blow trumpeter, onward's the cry!
> Fall, tyrants, fall - the devil care why!
> A health to the Queen; a health to the Queen
> Fill high boys, drain dry, boys,
> A health to the Queen! (38)

The line "fall tyrants fall, the Devil care why", is significant because it is written testimony to an attitude which became very prominent in the peak days of imperialism. The attitude that it did not matter what the nation did as long as the Union Jack flew over large territories, stands as a contrast to the earlier expansion which was cautious and on the whole certainly less jingoistic.

By far his most jingoistic poem is England's Day, in which he angrily rants at those of other nations who intimate that England has had its day, and is now declining. His aroused muse expresses almost violently his feelings in such lines as:

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(38) Ibid. p.283

'England has had her day!'
O ye who bear on every sea,
That flag of flags, so often sung,
Whose name in every human tongue,
Is t'other word for victory. (39)

Dobell, however, was more the poet of people and freedom than imperialism. He had been a radical in his younger days, and only became conservative later in life, and it is doubtful if he ever had any deep feelings for the imperial creed. There is a sense of restraint about his work, and in most cases quiet courage predominates rather than imperial hysteria.

Many other minor poets contributed to the imperial repertoire in these earlier days, and there was an ever increasing volume of verse appearing to celebrate every national occasion. Writers like Sir Francis Hastings Doyle and G. J. Melville-White and Andrew Lang were all prominent in developing imperial verse. Lang's White Pacha celebrated the death of Gordon, an issue which inflamed the hearts of many Englishmen, and his well known poem England expresses something of the attitude which the people had towards imperialism in this day. Lang deplores the fact that England no longer stirs people, as he says:

Well, if indeed that name no more
Must like a trumpet stir the blood;
Of all our fathers wrought and bore.. (40)

Thus the years which immediately preceded Disraeli's famous speech on imperial policy were years of preparation for the great sweep that was to come. Influences both poetic and political were being laid down. As we have seen, these were on the whole years of peace and prosperity

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(39) Ibid. Vol.II, p.383.

(40) Lang, John & Lang, Jean, Poetry of Empire, p.377

and there was little need for exterior pomp. It seems strange that when the decay began to set in, the outward exhibition became more brilliant, and as the changing world scene began to bring less prosperity, less domination to England, the more she sought to convince the world of her dominance.

There were indeed jingoes in the seventies who could fervently sing

> We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do
> We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've
> got the money too;
> We beat the bear before boys, and if we're
> staunch and true
> The Russians shall not have Constantinople. (41)

and the poets already had tasted imperialism, militarism and in some sense jingoism, but the people had not yet sensed the need for it, and did not do so until it became associated with their economic wants. This was what happened in the last quarter of the century when imperialism rose in one mighty wave to engulf the whole country.

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(41) Compton MacKenzie, Literature in My Time, p.100

Chapter Four

The Imperialist Poets from 1875-1900

A period of such political turmoil as the years between 1875 and 1900 represented gave rise to a vast number of ideas and opinions about problems of state. The great increase in magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, books and sermons literally swamped the Victorian reader with material of a controversial nature, and violent partisanships developed over almost every question. It was a day in which new public consciousness made itself felt in every field, and the "letters to the editor" section of almost every magazine was kept busy recording the various opinions. By far outstripping their rivals for public interest were the problems raised by religion and science in their struggle for supremacy, and the questions involved with English expansion and the growth of an imperial England.

A perusal of this literature will show that among many of the thoughtful Englishmen there was a strong objection to the imperialist's policies. It must not be imagined that every Englishman was a rampant imperialist ready to crush out any small nation, then hold a rabble-rousing parade to gloat over it. Admittedly much of the imperial exuberance expressed itself in this manner, but nevertheless there were saner heads and men of more forward vision than the dominant tendencies of the age would denote.

Men like Gladstone and Lloyd George in the political field were typical of the more liberal policies and of those who sought a domestic program of social improvement rather than imperial glory. The same applies to the literary field where men like Buchanan and Watson openly condemned the imperialist and everything he stood for. Unfortunately, however, power was in the hands of those who represented the great commercial interests, and who saw in the expansion of Em-

-pire a means of keeping them great, and who could count on the support of the aristocracy because Empire meant for them positions of importance in many lands and also they felt, a security against revolution and loss of their privileges.

To understand the writers of an age, it is almost necessary to know the audience they were writing for, and this is particularly true in the case of imperialism, because the poetry is such a close expression of the people's attitudes and feelings. Victorian England possessed three general classes of audiences, the aristocracy, the middle-class and the lower class. The aristocracy had at first despised the rising middle-class because they were not of the "blood", but as the age progressed, there grew a more tolerant and friendly attitude, no doubt due to the superior financial condition of the industrialists. The aristocracy had the privileges of better education and represented the enlightened. They gave full support to the imperial ideal, although they were revolted by the blatant vulgarity of the lower classes. Nevertheless, they were willing and eager to let the masses have their "circuses", so long as they did not ask for too much of the "bread".

E. T. Raymond has described the middle-class audience as "well fed, addicted to rather more healthy ideas of recreation than his predecessors, amazingly ignorant of the outside world, deplorably educated, but not unintelligent...." (1) Although this description was applied to the man of the nineties particularly, it equally applies to the better part of the last quarter of the century. The poorer classes had little before them but a bare subsistence, and although the Cockney rowdiness does not appear to have been in evidence so much, it was still apparently there, as the imperial festivals adequately showed.

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(1) E. T. Raymond, Portraits of the Nineties, p.17

These lower classes, as usual, represented the discontented, and many of them were being wooed into the arms of the Socialists who were opponents of imperialism. It was the middle-class who were described as a class who "ate, drank and sang Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" (2), and it might be said of the poorer classes that they eventually sang 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay' without the eating and drinking. The greater intermingling of the middle-class and the aristocracy gave them dominant political power, and with the assistance of an obedient church, they formulated the policies of government, financed and stimulated the production of imperial propaganda, and successfully made the Victorian believe that everything was being done for his own good.

Thus it was, with a greater consciousness of social and political activity, that the interests of the people began to reflect themselves in the writers. The problem of imperialism had by far the greatest appeal for the poets because of the high emotional content, and the association with national patriotism. The ever-increasing interest in Empire awakened the poets to a new sense of their heritage, and provided new inspiration. The production of patriotic poetry in the years previous to 1870 had been spasmodic, while the poetry itself had been more reserved. This was especially true of imperial verse.

With Tennyson, however, poetry had been brought closer to the masses, both because of his social message and his position as Laureate. Poetry was therefore in a better position than ever before to be the spokesman of great issues, and when the imperial tide flowed more volubly, poetry rose to a position of high influence, and with it the poet who could best represent imperialism. Rudyard Kipling was by far the most prominent literary man of his day, despite the fact that there were many better poets. The paradox is that poetry had to make a terrible sacri-

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(2) Ibid. p.16

-fice to cater to the national spirit, and the verse which rose to prominence was on the whole of an inferior quality, descending even to blatant doggerel. Chesterton sums this up effectively when he says that Kipling marks the 'success of the politician and the failure of the poet".(3)

Throughout the age, the poetry of higher quality was being written by poets like Rossetti, Francis Thompson, Meredith, and of course the decadent work of Wilde and Swinburne. Many of these other poets were touched by the imperial enthusiasm, but with the exception of Swinburne it was limited, and in most cases opposed to the strident imperial feeling. By far the most influential work, however, was that of the imperialist, especially after 1890, because it found a larger audience and spoke the language of their emotions.

Many of these poets were themselves writers in other fields, especially prose, particularly in the journalistic field. Journalism obviously would enjoy considerable prestige in a society that concerned itself so greatly with its own affairs, and the newspaper had become extremely influential. Men like Stead and Harmsworth, with their journalistic enterprises, wielded immense power over the minds of the masses. Henley and Kipling both wrote for newspapers and magazines either poems, short stories or articles of current interest. Every scribbler seems to have had a hand at writing imperialist verse, and hundreds of poems appeared in the magazines by people who wrote only when stimulated by some national event. Often the imperial poets themselves were writers of much better non-political poetry, and to many of them imperialism was the lesser part of their work.

Among the more ardent of the imperialist poets was Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) who did not turn to writing imperial verse until

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(3) G. K. Chesterton, The Victorian Age in Literature, p.243

his later years. In his youth, Swinburne had been an intense radical and an ardent republican proclaiming an extreme admiration for men like Milton and Cromwell. His poems are filled with the passionate cry for liberty, and Welby says of his love of freedom:

> Freedom for Swinburne is not a riot of impulses in a vacuum. It is that condition in which man becomes the conscious, voluntarily dedicated unimpeded instrument of the supreme purpose..... complete self-realization for man... (4)

Swinburne carried this philosophy into every field of his life, and his widely publicized aetheism and his sensual poetry shocked the Victorian purists. He hated smugness and hypocrisy, and consequently was often out of tune with his age.

Swinburne's patriotic strain was discovered by Theodore Watts-Dunton, a writer of merit, and a strong-headed individual to whom Swinburne turned in his later years, and under whose influence he lived in the seclusion of "The Pines". Watts-Dunton had aspirations to obtain the Laureateship for Swinburne, but the poet's republican sentiments were too well known to make that possible. Nevertheless, Watts-Dunton succeeded in arousing the imperial strain in Swinburne, and the poems produced were in some cases equal to those of Kipling in their jingoistic strain. By 1876 he was deeply concerned with the foreign policy of England - the brilliant policy of prestige and colonial expansion envisioned by Disraeli.

With Tennyson, he is an example of how intensely conscious of their period the poets were; hardly one of them escaped the social forces at work unless they lost themselves in religious mysticism or escaped into aestheticism. Undoubtedly the immense pride of the Victorians made them feel that in expressing their age, they were expressing

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(4) T. E. Welby, A Study of Swinburne, p.6

values which were unquestionably eternal.

At his roots, Swinburne was of the Anglo-Saxon stock - a lover of the sea and wind, and possessed of a free and primitive passion. It is conceivable that his heritage made it impossible for him to resist imperialism, because it embodied the power and might he saw in nature. Swinburne's reaction against his age was directed in some measure against the restrictions of the Victorians, and imperialism might have appeared as the first social force which offered an unrestrained freedom in spirit, morals and action.

Swinburne's enthusiasm for the struggles of freedom in Europe shows itself as early as 1878, when he was becoming interested in political events. His sonnet To Louis Kossuth is a panegyric to the leader of the Hungarian Republic in its struggles against the autocrats of Austria and Russia. He reveals his hatred for the Russians as he exclaims:

> Kossuth we praise thee.....
> .....
> Thy voice the trumpet of the truth of God,
> Thine hand the thunderbearer's raised to smite
> As with heaven's lightning for a sword and rod
> Men's heads abased before the Muscovite. (5)

It would seem that Swinburne's recalling of England's struggle with Russia and her friendship with men like Kossuth inspired him to associate her with the ideal of freedom he so admired, despite the fact that she was a monarchy and not the republic he would have preferred. Swinburne's pen was always ready to offer praise to the liberator, and in his stirring tribute to the Italian patriot Mazzini he extols all lovers of freedom:

> Glory be his forever, while his land lives
> and is free. (6)

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(5) C.H.Page, and S.Thompson, British Poets of the Nineteenth Century, p.923.

(6) Ibid. On the Monument Erected to Mazzini at Genoa, p.939.

Although he hated monarchy in the abstract, Swinburne had been won over to the side of Victoria by Watts-Dunton. The poet had always felt very bitterly the assumption of the title Empress by Victoria, but when Watts-Dunton pointed out the criticisms in the foreign press, especially in Russia, which brought shame to England and insult to the Queen, Swinburne became angered, and his attitude towards the ruler changed considerably, and he was eventually able to write:

> Time gave thee, as he gave none other,
> a station like a star. (7)

This was an important conversion, for to be an imperialist, a poet had to pay homage to the symbol of that imperialism.

Swinburne's poem The Commonweal was dedicated to the fiftieth Jubilee in 1887, and not only extols the Queen, but also idealizes England. He speaks of the Empire as "earth's lordliest commonweal", and expresses a feeling which was prevalent with the Victorians - the idea of an unchanging Empire:

> Though time discrown and change dismantle
> The pride of thrones and towers that frown,
> How should they bring her glories down - (8)

To Swinburne, England was the land of the free, the land of truth, and he tends to allow his emotional idealism to exaggerate, as most of the imperialists did, when he says:

> She loving light, for light's sake only,
> And truth for only truth's... (9)

and in the poem The Armada he points to England as the only bastion of truth and light, and that:

> Earth shall wither when eyes turned thither
> Behold not light in her darkness shine. (10)

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(7) A. C. Swinburne, Poems, David, McKay, p.275

(8) Ibid. p.273

(9) Ibid. p.273

(10) Ibid. p.276

This sentiment was certainly an integral part of the Victorian's imperial thinking. England, the haven of the oppressed, the bastion of truth and freedom, the possessor of a light which must be spread to others. The justification for imperial policy thus extends beyond the desire for expansion into a responsibility to other nations, and as England brings light to others she becomes brighter herself until she dims the universal stars:

> ...More perfect than the sun's in sight
> Till star and sun seem all funereal
> Lamps of the vaulted night. (11)

This growing sense of national egotism was not confined to the English alone, but was common throughout Europe. Germany was beginning to feel their national values, and were expressing them both in their literature and in their political activity, especially the search for colonies and the expanding navy. France was expressing her new found nationalism in terms of a strong country which might seek revenge on Germany for the 1871 defeat, while Russia under the autocratic Czar Nicholas was showing increased interest in European politics, especially with her pan-Slavic ideas, and her search for colonies. It was generally under the stimulus of Russia that the door to the Far East in China and Japan was cracked open, and a scramble for territory began there as well as in Africa. The world at this time was a group of Great Powers each with ambitions to become greater and stronger than the other, and once the nations had embarked on this policy there was no calling them back. It was as if some great destiny was sweeping them forward, and to each of them that destiny was a special God-given charge.

The English for Swinburne became the "spiritual successors of the Athenians" (12), and he began to see her in terms of Grecian perfection:

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(11) Ibid. p.273

(12) T. E. Welby, op. cit., p.243.

Earth bears none that beholds the sun so pure of
record, so clothed with grace... (13)

All nations had fallen short of the poet's ideal of freedom and purity, but England had come closer than any of them, and in the poem Centenary of the Battle of the Nile he says that Nelson's great struggle:

...left even England more sublime
And higher on heights that none but she
may climb (14)

It was the vision of freedom which turned Swinburne's poetic powers into imperial channels. As he grew older he entered into a state of dejection and disillusionment, and shut himself away with the possessive Watts-Dunton. He seems to have felt the need for something concrete upon which to fix his ideals, as he no longer cared to speak the great words of liberty, virtue, patriotism, abstracted from definite events. Consequently he made England his focal point, because:

...earth has but one England, crown and head
Of all her glories till the sun be dead,
Supreme in peace and war, supreme in song
Supreme in freedom.... (15)

This is the England of Grecian heritage which Swinburne sets up as a political idol for all men to worship, because she is the source of freedom and all the noble qualities towards which men aspire.

Another strong element in Swinburne's poetry is the love of the sea, and this is carried into his imperialistic verse. Undoubtedly, the proximity of England to the sea and the fact that so much of her destiny was associated with it made the poet feel the sense of oneness between his country and the universal and eternal sea. In the poem Armada he describes England as

Reared and nursed and crowned and cherished
by the sea, wind and the sun,
Sweetest land and strongest, face most fair
and mightiest heart in one. (16)

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(13) A. C. Swinburne, op.cit., p.282

(14) A.C. Swinburne, Poems, Chatto and Windus, Vol. VI, p.337

(15) Ibid. Vol. VI, p.338

(16) A.C. Swinburne, Poems, David McKay, p.275

Again,his fair England is "sweet as the sea that shields her and pure as the sea from stain" (17), and the sea is unequal to her, because England is the country "round whose feet the wild waves fawn" (18). To the imperialist there are no words too sacred, none too great to sing the praises of England.

As he sings of the sea, so too does he sing of the men who man the ships of England's navy, and he is equally extravagant in their praise. in the Armada he describes them as

> Invincible even as their God is omnipotent, infinite God..... (19)

and in A Word to the Navy he extols Victoria as

> Queen born of the sea that has borne her the mightiest of seamen on earth.. (20)

At this particular time the Navy was becoming a very definite reality in the minds of the great English masses. Ever since the French threat to invade England, the "naval scare" had aroused the country to the need for a greater appreciation of the navy. Arthur J. Marder, quotes a Captain Fortescue as saying about the people of the eighties that

> The ignorance of the British public of everything regarding the Navy can only be described as colossal... (21)

The command of the sea was more or less regarded as the birthright of the English people, and from childhood they sang the familiar "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves", and accepted without question that it did. The panicky naval scares, however, of 1884 and 1888, aroused a new interest in the naval problem, and set officials to the task

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(17) Ibid. Armada, p.276

(18) Ibid. The Commonweal, p.273

(19) Ibid. p.278

(20) A. C. Swinburne, Poems, Chatto and Windus, Vol. VI, p.342

(21) A. J. Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power, p.44.

of enlightening the people about their first line of defence - their senior service.

This enlightenment took the form of the "Royal Naval Exhibition" of 1891, and what was described as the "hurrah" trips. These were organized cruises around the coast of England to acquaint people with the fleet. The name is suggestive, and that the visiting crowds shouted "hurrah" every time they saw some part of the navy can easily be believed.

The elementary school was not immune from the propaganda, and "Trafalgar Day" was celebrated in schools by lectures on the significance of the battle and the singing of a fervent song called the 'Death of Nelson". Literature pertinent to the navy's importance was also introduced into the schools in the form of pamphlets, especially for boys, and an example of this material is cited by Mr. Marder. After suggesting how terrible it would be if the navy was not strong enough for its job, the writer goes on to say:

> In a few weeks' time or less even than that, bread and meat and all the goods would cost so much that your parents would not be able to buy enough to feed themselves and you; each night you would be crying because you had no supper, and each morning because you had no breakfast, and it would be no use going to the neighbours for help, because they would be just as badly off... (22)

Undoubtedly this left a considerable impression upon the youth, and to follow up this propaganda with something more concrete in the form of the Navy League which was started in 1896, and recruited a good number of youngsters for naval service. It never met, however, with the enthusiastic support of the naval authorities as did a similar organization in Germany, but it is nevertheless one of the few imperialistic organizations which has survived.

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(22) Ibid. p.53

The poets at this particular time began adding their voices to the cry for a greater navy, and Tennyson's poem The Fleet, written about 1887 was inspired by one of the many speeches being made on behalf of the navy. The particular speech was one made by Sir Graham Berry before the Colonial Institute, and is typical of these harangues which implored England to build an overpowering navy even as the continental powers were building armies because the continuance of Empire depended upon it. Tennyson in his poem throws out a challenge to the people:

> You, you, if you shall fail to understand
> What England is, and what her all in all,
> On you will come the curse of all the land,
> Should this Old England fall which
> Nelson left so great. (23)

Swinburne in his imperial verse brings out strongly the unity which exists between England and the sea, and chants with pride that oneness. He makes Englishmen feel the power of that sea and the ships that sail it on his behalf, and that their destiny is as eternal as that sea which

> ...names thee...claims thee,
> The lordliest child of time. (24)

As the years passed and the imperial fervour became more intense, Swinburne's jingoism began to show its worst side. More speaks of the idea of liberty throwing the poet into a "kind of frothing mania" and these words might well be applied to what happened to Swinburne over imperialism. He took every opportunity to discharge his jingoism on men like Napoleon the Third and Gladstone, and on those whom he considered enemies to England, especially the Russians and the Boers. In his poem The Transvaal this spirit prevails when he speaks of the Boers as those who possess "Foul tongues that blackened God's dishonoured name with prayers and curses" (25) and proclaims the time at hand to

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(23) A. Tennyson, Poetical Works, Houghton Mifflin Co., p.524

(24) A. C. Swinburne, Poems, Chatto and Windus, Vol. VI, p.342

(25) Ibid. p.385

...scourge these dogs, agape with jaws afoam,
Down out of life, Strike, England, and Strike home. (26)

He rants against the "French hounds" and is ever ready to write any jingo poem to come to the aid of England in whatever cause she is involved. Fortunately, Swinburne's imperial poetry, especially the jingo elements, represents a small portion of his work. It was a noticeable fact that after Swinburne went to live with Watts-Dunton that his muse was in a constant state of decline, and that the majority of the imperial poetry is concentrated at the period when imperialism was at its height. Perhaps his genius having spent itself on the great poetry which he had written found some measure of consolation in this lesser type of work. Undoubtedly Watts-Dunton played an important part in the production of this verse, but how much is difficult to say. Perhaps the momentary applause of the nation appealed to the disillusioned Swinburne, but whatever else inspired this poetry, it cannot be denied that his ideals of liberty were strongly behind the imperial verse. That he became convinced that power and force were important on earth is reflected in a poem called A Word for the Country, an earlier poem in the heat of his liberal fury in which he attacks the dominance of the Lords and puts forward the idea:

We know, we believe and we see it,
Force only has power upon earth.. (27)

and in a note of resignation, concludes, "So be it! and ever so be it!" (28) Perhaps in imperialism he saw the renewal of this philosophy and found consolation in the thought that it was bringing liberty to the nations.

Swinburne was also one of the so-called decadent poets, and as certain critics suggest, decadence in art was a counterpart of materialism in thought. Imperialism was chiefly activated by materialism, and the relationship of the two finds its expression in Swinburne. The poet's

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(26) Ibid. p.385.

(27) A. C. Swinburne, Poems, David McKay, p.567

(28) Ibid. p.567.

release of sensual passion in what has been termed his "hymns of lust and satiety" represents an uncontrolled splurge of emotion under the name of freedom, and they carry within them all the seeds of a decadent and disorganized society. Likewise with imperialism which had its crust of pomp and festivity, its blatant and arrogant apologists, but which instead of being the height of England's glory was rather the last gasp of an age which had so convinced itself of its own greatness that it could not bear to see itself die. Swinburne carried the same license into his imperialist ventures as he had done in his other work, but instead of the subject being man and his flesh, it was man and his nation. However, the same emotional eroticism was there, the same denial of moral principle, the same uncontrolled license, and Swinburne found it good. He pinned his faith to the state in a search for certainty, and found it in an impregnable and eternal England:

> ...come the world against her
> England yet shall stand. (29)

Another poet of considerable importance in the imperial camp was Alfred Austin (1835-1913). His importance, however, by no means lies in the quality of his verse, because he was rated by the critics of his day all the way from a second rate to a tenth rate poet, and time has not changed that judgement. Inasmuch as Austin succeeded to the Poet Laureateship on the death of Tennyson, his position as court singer gave wide currency to his verses. As we have seen, Tennyson became almost an institution with the Victorians even as the Queen, and he had raised the Laureateship to a high point of prestige by his forceful and dignified poetry. On his death Gladstone refused to fill the post because he saw no one suitable, but when Lord Salisbury became

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(29) Ibid. England: An Ode, p.612

Prime Minister,he, with the approval of the Queen,chose Austin, who was then(1896) a little known poet who had published a few volumes of none too promising poetry.

There was considerable criticism levelled at the choice which was termed by one writer as making the Laureateship a "prostitute to politics" (30). The "Tribune" commenting editorially on the new Laureate said:

> The appointment of Alfred Austin as the Poet Laureate is a curious bit of Tory politics. He is the principal leader-writer for the"Standard", and we shall see the somewhat comic spectacle of the official troubadour of the nation turning out 'daily editorials' in praise or defence of the man who gave him his harp. (31)

Undoubtedly the choice was political. Austin was known as a conservative, and he had expressed his politics to some degree in a poem called Why England is Conservative. He was consequently a safe choice for an imperial government. Swinburne and Morris who were both in line for the post by reason of their superior work, were both unacceptable because, as one critic said,"Mr Morris is a socialist and Mr Swinburne is every kind of an ist".(32)

Austin had been active in the prose field in writing anti-Gladstone pamphlets and along with Courthope had founded the "National Review" , an exclusively conservative magazine. After his appointment to the Laureateship, Austin threw himself enthusiastically into producing verse to serve the interests which had placed him there, and he succeeded in leaving a considerable amount of drivel in his poetic heritage. He made the post the laughing stock of the country, at least among the more discriminating minds,although great masses of people felt sympathetic towards him. Even his serious verse was of such poor quality that re-

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(30) The New Poet Laureate, Critic, Vol. XXVIII, p.25.

(31) Ibid. p.26.

(32) Ibid. p.26.

-viewers were constantly apologizing for his efforts. His chief outlet for his imperial poetry was through the columns of the "Times", which by this time was a rampant imperial journal. Austin's poems were read with enthusiasm if not with admiration, but they never enjoyed the popularity of Kipling, because of his lack of ability to give life to his poetry.

Austin, however, was seldom disturbed by the severity of the criticisms levelled at him in the more discriminating magazines. He was profoundly convinced of his own genius in the true Victorian manner, and is described as "praised by none, derided by all, he pipes on imperturbable". (33). He never became aware of his own negligible position as a poet, and stands to posterity, not so much as an example of a poet, but of man's ability to delude himself into believing that he is great.

Austin was entirely provincial in his outlook. He had little in the way of vision of the ideal of liberty which had possessed Swinburne and Tennyson, and his imperial singing was for the sake of imperial singing, and because of the position he held. There is nothing in his imperial poetry to commend - nothing of Swinburne's strong Anglo-Saxon feeling - nothing of Tennyson's broader vision - there is nothing outside of the provincial outlook of Austin.

The events of the day were for Austin the material for poetry which could meet the interests and emotional enthusiasms of the masses in their imperial fervour, and many of these outpourings were an embarrassment to the more level-headed. One critic implores the Laureate to come to his senses:

> Is it not time...that someone should gently but firmly remonstrate with Mr. Alfred Austin, author of 'Mafeking' and other verses, whose indiscreet utterances in the newspapers are becoming a national scandal? (34)

(33(William Archer, Quousque Tandem? Critic, Vol.XXXVII, p.145

(34) Ibid. p.145.

Austin then, blared the imperial trumpet because he loved to blow it, and because those who gave him the Laureateship in reality had given him the trumpet, and expected him to blow it. He wrote articles in the "Times" on patriotism, and published poem after poem whenever an event of imperial importance presented itself.

The fiftieth Jubilee had aroused in the people a greater consciousness of Empire and of the Queen as a symbol of all its might and prosperity. She now appeared before the people as 'Empress of India', and on that Jubilee Day Londoners saw her paid homage by kings, princes, soldiers and sailors, diplomats and the aristocracy from far countries, and they felt with the lines:

> Queen of the Sea!
> What prouder title dignifies
> A monarchy?
> The orient owns it and it lies
> Amidst thy countless colonies
> .....
> A wayward Realm
> Yet ruled in love for the world's gain
> Thou guid'st the helm
> That bring'st our commerce o'er the main
> And makes us rich without a stain. (35)

Much had been done in the years between 1883 and 1887 to give vital life to the imperial attitude. The formation of the Primrose League in 1883 was one of the most important steps, and it brought to the fore an organization specifically directed towards the furthering of knowledge, and greatness of the Empire. By the year 1887 annual celebrations of Primrose day was a common affair, and it was marked by working men wearing primroses in their buttonholes or caps and often decorating the fronts of their houses with Union Jacks and primroses. The flower was supposed to have been Disraeli's favourite, and indirectly it marked

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(35) Earl of Rosslyn, Love that Lasts Forever, Blackwoods Vol.CXLI, p.325

the birthday of the great founder of imperialism. Innumerable reports in the "Times" show that great enthusiasm marked the celebrations of this birthday. The Beaconsfield statue was elaborately decorated with primroses and mottoes such as "Rule Britannia" and "Empress Queen", and thousands of people passed by it and threw in their primroses as a tribute to Disraeli's memory. Store windows were decorated with Union Jacks and primroses, and even the Queen sent a wreath of these symbolic flowers.

The declaration of faith of the Primrose League gives a clue to its aims, and to the aims of the whole imperial movement. Well over a million people swore to the oath which read:

> I declare on my honour and faith that I will devote my best ability to the maintenance of Religion, of the Estates of the Realm and of the Imperial Ascendancy of the British Empire; and that consistently with my allegiance to the sovereign of these realms I will promote with discretion and fidelity the above objects being those of the Primrose League. (36)

The methods used by the Primrose League were in true jingoistic style, as it organized a considerable amount of entertainment to stimulate the jingo element among the people. Such handbills as:

> Primrose Day, Primrose Day -Don't forget the grand Negro Entertainment. (37)

suggest the type of amusement which constituted a large part of the program, and interwoven with it was the propaganda of Empire. A typical meeting would involve singing "Soldiers of the Queen" with such lines as:

> When we say that England's <u>master</u>
> Remember who have made <u>her</u> so. (38)

and this would be followed by a lecture on some phase of Empire. Sometimes the wonderful Magic Lantern would be used to show the British Flag

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(36) Janet H.Robb, <u>The Primrose League</u>, p.50.

(37) Ibid. p.87.

(38) E.T.Raymond, <u>Portraits of the Nineties</u>, p.17

flying in some distant part of the world, or the mighty British Navy gathered for battle manoeuvres, or the Queen as Empress of India. Many of these meetings were often presided over by the local schoolmasters and clergymen, and this gave them an air of official sanction.

Much of the propaganda was brought out by means of 'tableaux vivants', dramatics, posters and pamphlets. The pamphlets in particular are interesting. They dealt with innumerable topics on the subject of imperialism, and one in particular was directed to

> .....instruct the workingmen and women how to answer the arguments of the Radicals and the Socialists and the Atheists in the workshops and in the public houses and at street corners... (39)

There was a certain low strain about the League which encouraged the strongest emotional prejudices and opened the way for a full sway of rowdy singing-especially imperialist songs-dances and gaudy entertainment. It was looked upon by a great number of people as being vulgar, and in reply to this accusation, Lad Salisbury, wife of the Prime Minister, replied:

> Of course it's vulgar! But that is why we have got on so well. (40)

That the League enjoyed a considerable success is attested to by the growth of imperial sentiment which it helped to stimulate. Salisbury paid tribute to its work, and recognized its power. It was in an excellent position to create in the minds of its followers certain attitudes towards political questions, and in this capacity it functioned admirably.

When Gordon was murdered at Khartoum the indignation among the English people was very great, and the newspapers combined with the

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(39) Janet H. Robb, Op., cit., p.49.

(40) Ibid., p.87.

Primrose League did much to deepen this feeling. The League had a tableau showing the death of Gordon, marked 'Defeat', shown to the accompaniment of much haranguing about the honour of England. With the settling of the Soudan question it produced another, marked 'Vindication' which was usually shown to the accompaniment of the National Anthem. The papers encouraged people to write essays and poems about Gordon, and offered prizes for these efforts. Thus between the two, jingo hysteria over the affair was kept at white heat.

It was in such historical incidents as these which arose out of the political jockeying of the nations for power and prestige that Austin earned himself the title of the "hysterical Helot of Imperialism". (41)

In 1898, for example, the Fashoda incident inspired his muse, and he produced a poem which demonstrates his braggadocio, He denounces France and other nations in the poem Pax Britannica when he says:

> Then seeing her within her waves so blest
> The jealous nations, panoplied alike
> Said 'Look, she wears no armour on her breasts
> What if we strike?'

England, however, is ready with her might and takes up the challenge like the strong lion, and consequently the other nations yield:

> Dazed and dismayed, they veiled their futile vow,
> Some fain would be her friend and some would nurse
> Their hate till they could curb the might that now
> They could not but curse. (42)

This was the type of poetry which the critics pulverized, but without any effect on Austin, who remained divinely satisfied with himself and impervious to their barbs, while he executed his "blaring variations upon Rule Britannia". (43)

By 1895 when Salisbury's government was in power, the imperialist

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(41) Stuart P. Sherman, On Contemporary Literature, p.211.

(42) Alfred Austin, Pax Britannica, Living Age, Vol.CCXIX, p.860-861

(43) William Archer, Quousque Tandem? Critic, Vol. XXXVII, p.149.

tide was running strongly, and the chief aim of politician and people alike was to resist Little Englandism. It was about this time that the Transvaal became involved in the hectic turmoil of the political events set in motion in 1896 by Dr. Jameson.

Jameson's Raid caused a great sensation in international circles, and also among the people who were continually on edge with one incident after another. Newspapers, magazines and speakers harangued on the issue for months, and there was a strong development of feeling on both sides of the question as to the justification for the raid. One explanation offered was that Jameson had received a note from the Uitlanders in Johannesburg inviting him to come to the rescue because in the event of war breaking out over the Boer situation;

> ...thousands of unarmed women and children will be at the mercy of well-armed Boers and property of enormous value will be placed in great peril. (44)

This was the grounds on which Jameson argued his appeal, and which gained popular support from the masses, but the government, however, was forced to recognize Kruger's statements that the raid was carried out

> ...not to protect unarmed women and children, but in the interests of a non-dividend paying Chartered Company, to seize a town whose revenues are over half a million sterling a year. (45)

This incident was the stimulating force behind a poem which came from the Laureate's pen, called Jameson's Ride, and which proclaimed dramatically:

> There are girls in the gold-reef city
> There are mothers and children too,
> And they cry, 'Hurry up for pity',
> So what can a brave man do? (46)

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(44) Jameson's Raid and Its Causes, The Saturday Review, Vol.LXXXI, p.30.

(45) Ibid. p.30.

(46) London Times, Jan. 11, 1896.

Austin, true to form, played up the emotional qualities and was taken to task by the liberal elements over his performance. As usual the poem was criticized in unflattering terms. The Laureate refused to heed, however, and the poem Inflexible as Fate appeared, expressing the notion of England standing facing "foul fortune with unfaltering hands". Aside from the alliteration, the idea of the mighty Empire needing a strong inflexibility against the Boers strikes a ludicrous note, and although neither Austin nor the people ever believed the Boers would prove at all difficult, the struggle was more intense than they had bargained for, and they were forced to call upon some of the inflexibility before victory. Austin looks forward to the time when victory will come, and concludes his poem with:

> Till having backward rolled the lawless tide
> Of trusted treason, tyranny and pride,
> Her flag hath brought inflexible as fate
> Charter of Freedom to a fettered state. (47)

"Punch" was a constant critic of the Laureate, and after the Jameson poem, the magazine published a satire mimicking the Laureate's style, and makes Austin say:

> I must be inspired to order
> Go tell 'em to save their breath
> I can rhyme 'to order with border'
> And jingle "to breath with death'.
> ---
> Of Pegasus I'm on the saddle
> But why does he cough Hee-Haw
> Eight stanzas inspired! Mad ones!
> Sound well if sung to a band. (48)

When Austin published his serious work called England's Darling, in which he recounts a saga of Alfred the Great, and takes every opportunity to extol the virtues of England, "Punch" produced its own parodied

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(47) Ibid. Nov. 2nd., 1899.

(48) Punch, Vol. CX, p.33

version called Alfred to Alfred, in which Alfred the Great says:

> In dear old 'foam-fenced' England, I should feel myself at home,
> But not among the jingoes who are also given to foam,
> Foam at the mouth my Alfred like mad dogs and men in fits...
> .....
> Still I wouldn't mind so much if Alfred limited his odes
> To poems upon Jameson and dithyrambs on Rhodes,
> But it sets the shades a-sniggering and old Cerberus a-snarling
> To think of Saxon Alfred being shrined in England's Darling!!! (49)

The high point of the imperial feeling took place on the so-called "Mafeking Night" which celebrated the relief of the South African town by the English after a siege which had lasted from October 15th 1899 until May 16th 1900, and had been distinguished by the bravery of the English garrison under Baden-Powell. The siege became a focal point for the people's emotions not only in England but in all the colonies, and with its relief it signallized the Boer defeat. There had been a great deal of talk about English heroism and honour and many other things dear to the imperialists' hearts, and when the town was eventually captured, London and other cities went hysterical. The word 'mafficking' was added to the English vocabulary to signify riotous and uncontrolled celebration. The cynicism of the Great War of 1914 had not yet eaten into the people's minds, and a swaying howling mob surged through London streets booing and hissing the Little Englanders and wildly cheering "B.P." as Baden-Powell, the hero of Mafeking was affectionately called, and "Joe Chamberlain", whose picture appeared in profusion. Overwhelming emotion made everyone brothers of Empire and the aristocracy and the middle-class and the Cockney slapped each other's back and waved their Union Jacks and sang the jingo songs to the accompaniment of mouth organs, barrel organs and even pianos.

Again the Laureate arose to the occasion and produced in the columns of the "Times" the poem Mafeking, which celebrated the undaunted

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(49) Ibid. Vol. CX, p.65.

heroism and glory of an everlasting deed in extravagant words which concluded:

> Long as the waves shall roll,
> Long as fame guards her scroll
> And men through heart and soul
> Thrill to true glory
> Their deed from age to age
> Shall voice and verse engage
> Swelling the splendid page
> Of England's Story. (50)

Aside from his effusions in the "Times" and other publications, Austin published several volumes of poems which were liberally sprinkled with imperialistic themes.

In the poem Why England is Conservative there is a clue to Austin's political philosophy and a suggestion as to why he would so easily find his way into the imperial fold. He reveals an attitude of complacent Toryism which is astonishing in view of the changing circumstances of the day. Socialism was active, trade Unions were gaining power and change was everywhere present in almost all fields of endeavour. In spite of this, however, Austin naively inquires if England would exchange her stability and order for a democracy without a throne or towers and the rule of a

> A herd of hinds too equal to be free
> Greedy of others, jealous of their own. (51)

He sees in England a place unaltered where "sweet order now breathes cadenced tone" (52) and where/change cannot operate, and he says contentedly:

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(50) Times, May 21st., 1900.

(51) Alfred Austin, Lyrical Poems, p.116

(52) Ibid. p.116

Therefore sit high enthroned on every hill
Authority!.....
Nor, old tradition falter in the tale
Of lowly valour led by lofty will. (53)

The Tory elements who put the laurel upon his brow must have appeared to him to be the embodiment of that authority and the preservers of tradition, and consequently he did not find it difficult to assist their political policies with his harp.

In the poem Look Seaward Sentinel, he sees England as a place of strong sons in whose fearless eyes shines

.....the light
Of centuries of fame and battles won
And Empire ranging roundward with the sun; (54)

and he feels their pride. It is the England of tradition - the England of security against change and turmoil he sees going on in other nations;

But we behind the bulwarks of brine and rampart
of breakers,
Year after year
Drop the seed in the drill and furrow and harvest our acres
And feel no fear. (55)

Austin is the symbol of English insularity which by the nineties had been long recognized as obsolete. He sees in the Empire a means of preserving England from the foes whose "spear is the child of their threshold" (56) so that she might continue unchanged. Austin never lost that Tory attitude, and his pride and feeling are forever England because it is the place where

.....side by side
Authority and Freedom reign. (57)

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(53) Ibid.,p.117.

(54) Ibid.,p.137.

(55) Ibid.,p.138.

(56) Ibid.,p.138.

(57) Ibid., On Returning to England, p.147.

Empire to Austin is second to England just as England was second to Empire with Kipling. Austin loves Empire because it brings prestige to England. His is essentially an 'English garden' mind with its quiet unchanging atmosphere and the same flowers growing year after year, and England's beauty is the beauty which makes Austin exult:

> .....love this lovely earth
> And bless Heaven for one's British birth. (58)

He is the poet of jingoism undoubtedly, but he is not the poet of militarism. Even his most jingoistic poems lack the enthusiasm and fervour which was essential to their popularity, and when they stand in contrast to Kipling's this is more evident. He is the quiet insular poet trying to be the Bard of Imperial Empire, and is at his best when he is singing the praises of some quiet English country scene rather than the stories of Empire.

His love of England was as passionate as a reserved character like Austin's could muster, and in a poem Is Life Worth Living? he gives expression to this in the only militaristic lines he ever wrote of any force:

> So long as flashes English steel
> And English trumpets shrill,
> He is dead already who doth not feel
> Life is worth living still. (59)

It is doubtful whether this is a sincere feeling, and more likely with Austin the beauty of England would be a better reason for life.

He betrays a pride in England as ruler of the sea and in keeping with the common sentiment he sings:

> Ours is the sea to rule, to keep. (60)

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(58) Ibid. p.148.

(59) Alfred Austin, English Lyrics, p.162

(60) Alfred Austin, Lyrical Poems, p.141 Look Seaward Sentinel

and his all inclusive vision is for an England which will remain through time the guardian of the sea:

> And though the world together band,
> Not all the legions of the land
> Shall ever wrest from England's hand
> The Sceptre of the Sea. (61)

Austin was the subject of vicious attacks both by critics and politicians alike, but no poet, however, can be entirely blamed who had a fondness for his native land such as Austin had. He reflected his times, and found his example of jingoism in high places from men like Rosebery, Chamberlain and Salisbury. There were men of repute intellectually and politically, and they stood for the conservatism which Austin felt necessary to England. He saw in his native land a race of men "by birthright free"(62), and in the English countryside with its hedges and stately halls and green fields all the tradition and beauty which he loved. A wide Empire meant security for these things and to support Empire he was preserving England according to the common belief of the day.

As one critic says, there was a "pathetic absurdity" (63) about his position as Laureate, and undoubtedly one can feel sympathy for a man of such reserve as an individual and such inferior ability as a poet being faced with the task of producing poems in praise of court, political policies, military glory and all the others associated with imperialism.

It was into this milieu of jingoistic poems, music-hall entertainment, flag-waving and hero-worship that William Ernest Henley (1849-1903) came to celebrate the more brutal military side of imperialism. Henley

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(61) Ibid. p.142.

(62) Ibid. On Returning to England, p.147

(63) William Archer, Quousque Tandem, Critic, Vol.XXXVII, p.145

wrote poetry which possessed an amazing vitality second only to that of Kipling. Like other poets, Henley was not essentially a writer of imperial verse, but all his poetry shows a strong and virile 'activist' philosophy which represents a challenge to the decadents of his day, and also could be very easily adapted to imperial verse.

Henley was a man who glorified straightforward realism, and manly action in opposition to the artificiality of the bored aesthetes generally associated with the decadent movement. He had struggled valiantly against both poverty and disease, and in this struggle developed a fierce will to live and do things. Consequently he was well suited to the activist philosophy. He had suffered from tuberculosis of the bone which had left him crippled, and being a man of large proportions and vivid personality, he found it hard to reconcile his forced inaction with his love of life, and consequently discovered expression for his vast energies through poetry - especially his imperial poetry - and other literary work.

Henley's career was primarily involved with journalism, and he was at one time or another editor of the "National Observer", an imperial publication from cover to cover, and also with the "Magazine of Art", with which publication he distinguished himself as a sound critic. It was through the pages of the "Observer" that he brought to his readers the poetry of Kipling by the introduction of the Barrack Room Ballads, over which Henley exhibited much enthusiasm.

Early in life Henley developed an unswerving scorn for liberalism. It seemed to him to imply too strict a state policy which would interfere with the rights of the individual. This was in keeping with the Victorian middle-class tradition, whose whole philosophy was based upon the rights of the individual in economic fields, although by the eighties this idea was in a state of decline. Henley consequently paid al-

-legiance to the antithesis of liberalism, as represented by the Tories. He saw in them possibilities for a "self-reformative social system" (64) where there would be little danger of "suppressed individualism". (65) It was not unnatural, then, that Henley should have an antipathy towards the great liberal leader Gladstone, and often his attacks upon the Prime Minister's Little Englandism were of considerable violence.

The Tory policies of imperialism were at their highest point during Henley's most active years as a poet, and in these policies he found satisfaction for his innermost feelings. The imperial policy was a strong, an aggressive one - a challenge to duty and action, two qualities which Henley greatly admired. As Buckley says, for Henley "the unconquerable soul had significance only in a social context". (66)

Of all the poets of imperialism, Henley's approach to the subject is by far the most violent. He preludes and often surpasses Kipling in his love of violence and strife, and in his enthusiasm for the action of battle. As early in his writing career as 1891 he produced a poem called Prologue, which brings out this attitude:

> When the wind storms by with a shout, and the stern sea caves
> Rejoice in the tramp and the roar of onsetting waves,
> Then, then it comes home to the heart that the top of life
> Is the passion that burns the blood in the act of strife -
> .....
> But to drowse with the fen behind and the fog before,
> When the rain rot spreads, and the tame sea mumbles the shore,
> Not to adventure, none to fight, no right and no wrong,
> Sons of the sword heart sick for the stave of your Sire's old song -
> O, you envy the blessed dead that can live no more! (67)

Henley's manliness - reflected even in his extensive beard - is associated with the ideal of action held by the Victorians. The philosophy of the age stressed the need for individual action. It is possible

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(64) J. H. Buckley, William Ernest Henley, P.132

(65) Ibid. p.132

(66) Ibid. p.129

(67) W. E. Henley, Poems, p.227

that the religious state of affairs contributed something to this attitude, especially in the changing attitude towards the Protestant doctrine of Calvinism. In it the Victorians could find no surety of salvation because of its stress upon Divine election through its theory of predestination. Salvation was now in Empire and the elect were those of the Chosen Race who could beat the drum and rest assured that God was before them in a pillar of fire no matter where they went. Religious traditions had weakened, especially the ideals of Christianity, and ministerial texts of necessity came from the Old Testament to give moral support to the new imperial policies. The irregularity of the economic system had alarmed many and undermined faith in the capitalist system. It was a day in which anarchy might have prevailed had it not been for the binding force of imperialism which directed men's minds and energies into organized ventures on behalf of the state. Too strong an individuality among the people of a nation tends to increase the state control for the better preservation of the state. Thus in Victorian England during the last quarter century imperialism became the controlling force, and within its bounds the individual released his energies through an increased militarism and an increased emphasis on work and action.

Henley turned his attention to the militant side of imperialism and in his poem Song of the Sword, dedicated to Kipling, he presents the challenge of battle and adventure through the image of the sword of which England is the "spouse-in-chief" (68). He calls to his fellowmen with a new vigour:

> Follow O, follow, then,
> Heroes my harvesters!
> Where the tall grain is ripe
> Thrust in your sickles!
> Stripped and adust

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(68) Ibid. p.231.

In a stubble of Empire
Scything and binding
The full sheaves of sovranty:
Thus O, thus gloriously
Shall you fulfill yourselves!
Thus O, thus mightily
Show yourselves sons of mine -
Yea and win grace of me:
I am the sword! (69)

This is indeed, the strong battle call of ancient heathen pirates, and Henley's love of battle and action finds its genesis in the England of the early Saxon warriors when men of daring and battle prowess were the leaders of their fellows. His was a primitive love of life and the adventure of conquest appealed to him. In his own struggle for life he had realized that it was a case of the survival of the fittest, and the natural outcome of this applied to nations would justify expansion for survival. Consequently it is not for the sheer love of battle alone which Henley sings, but there is a purpose behind the sword:

Sifting the nations
The slag from the metal
The waste and the weak
From the fit and the strong. (70)

Here is Darwin's doctrine of survival applied to the nations where the weak must go under and the strong rise to the top through might. "Might is right" is the philosophy of imperialism at its worst, and Henley in his unquenchable zest gives full sanction to a return to the primitive.

If ever the political policies of the nations reflected this ideal it was during these years of the nineteenth century. It did not matter whether it was in Africa or China, as long as Germany, Russia, England or France could match each other in colonial grabbing - their people were satisfied. When the scramble for ports in China occurred and Germany and Russia seemed to have succeeded in getting ahead of England,

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(69) Ibid. p.34

(70) Ibid. p.35

there was a great commotion. Finally England managed to get a lease on the port of Wei-Hei-Wei, and feelings of prestige were restored. The political leaders made no attempt to hide their policies of balancing power with power, and the people took it for granted that war must be faced if necessary for the promotion of prestige, influence, and commercial interests. Edward Dicey reflects the temper of the imperialist in an article wherein he says:

> I call myself an imperialist; while people do not agree with my views insist on calling me a jingo.....I accept the designation, and in Egypt, in South Africa, in every part of the world where British interests are at stake, I am in favour of advancing and upholding these interests even at the cost of annexation and at the risk of war. The only qualification I admit is that the country we desire to annex or take under our protection...should be calculated to confer a tangible manifest advantage to the British Empire. (71)

In keeping with this philosophy there was naturally a good deal of militarism rampant and many people liked to talk about the "martial temper of the people". (72)

This policy of the strong subduing the weak which was practised by the politicians, approved by the people and sung by poets like Henley, did not go unchallenged in England. There was a steady stream of more enlightened articles constantly being written opposing the whole imperial scheme as reflected in the commercialism and militarism which was everywhere present. Gooch puts his finger on the irrationality of the policy and at the same time reflects something of our modern thinking when he discusses the seizure of the Chinese port:

> We should resist to the death an attempt on the part of foreign powers to seize our Chathams and our Plymouths; but we complacently force China to give us her ports when we think she is

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(71) Edward Dicey, Peace or War in South Africa, Fortnightly Review Vol.LXVI,p.419

(72) London Times, May 10, 1900.

> so weak that she cannot resist, and when she forcibly protests we are beyond measure astonished, and ascribe her action to the ingrained and incalculable wickedness of the Chinese nature. (73)

The tenour of this thought was ahead of its time, and found little response in the heart of an over-emotionalized nation which had given itself over to a vainglorious pursuit of power, and which wanted, not to hear itself criticized, but praised in the most extravagant and unreasoning fashion. The days when the English people had been indifferent to Empire were now over, and the imperial conscience was ascendant, and even in a book of nonsense verse for children the following lines appeared under the caricature of Ministers:

> Be the King's ministers Tory or Whig
> They must all be men to keep England big. (74)

Patriotism became the supreme duty of the Citizen - a patriotism which showed a strong self-assertiveness, and one which the strong individualistic tendencies of Henley could easily fit.

Henley's poem The Man in the Street bares this spirit in swaggering language when he holds up to ridicule the ways of peace:

> Hands in your pockets, eyes on the pavement
> Where in the world is the fun of it all? (75)

For the man of action this is lifeless and the need for action is expressed in the lines:

> But a row - but a rush - but a face in your fist
> Then a crash through the dark and a fall;
> And they carry you where? Does it matter a straw;
> You can look at them out of your pride;
> For you've had your will of a new front door, and
> your foot on the mat inside. (76)

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(73) M. A. Gooch, Imperialism, Heart of Empire, p.316

(74) The Causes of Imperialism in England, Nation, Vol.LXXIII, p.203

(75) W. E. Henley, op. cit. p.229.

(76) Ibid. p.229.

For Henley the purpose did not matter - there is love of action and violence for action and violence's sake:

> 'Death in the wrong cause, death in the right',
> O, its plain as a last year's comic song!
> For the thing is, give us a cause, and we'll risk
> Our skins for it, cheerfully right or wrong. (77)

It was "my country right or wrong", which was the all-pervading theme of the nations, and as one writer points out:

> Our statesmen, our journalists, our preachers come bound to every question of policy and morality by the silent influence of a half uttered thought - 'come what may, Empire must be saved'. (78)

Imperial policies met with success after success, for the Great Powers who each tended to respect each other's rights, and whose differences were mostly settled by diplomatic negotiation. The attitude that England should respect the rights of "other civilized powers" (79) is expressed in the following words:

> We should even welcome annexation by them in the cause of a common civilization, provided they do not pursue a policy of blocking the channels of trade by monopoly, and seek to remove patches of the earth's surface from the fertilizing flow of the commerce of the world. (80)

Behind all the glory and pomp there continually flowed the deeper implications of imperialism - that of a nation making doubly sure of its life, for in the final analysis England was a nation of traders to whom markets were a vital necessity.

There is, however, no deep inspiration to be found in bare commercialism, and few are willing to give their life in a struggle for markets. Imperialism had to find its roots deeper - in something much closer to the English people. This need of a more ideal motive was

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(77) Ibid. p.229

(78) Frederick Harrison, Empire and Humanity, Fortnightly Review, Vol.XXXIII p.297

(79) J. Lawson Walton, Imperialism, The Contemporary Review, Vol.LXXV, p.308

(80) Ibid. p.308.

filled by the rising enthusiasm for the English race, and the belief in a chosen destiny. This idea gave fuller significance to the imperial venture, and it was the poets who gave power to the theory as well as the politicians.

It is Henley who cries, when England faces the reverses of the Boer War,

> Where is our ancient pride of heart?
> Our faith in blood and star? (81)

This was the same theme which inspired Joseph Chamberlain to speak at Toronto in 1887 of

> ...the greatness and importance of the destiny which is reserved for the Anglo-Saxon race - (cheers) - for that proud, persistent, self-asserting and resolute stock....which is infallibly destined to be the predominating force in the future history and civilization of the world. (82)

and which made life cheap in these days when men defined their highest destiny in the service of Empire and Queen with a passion sometimes almost as intense as that of the ancient martyrs. It is in this latter mood that Henley writes one of his most jingoistic songs, New Song to an Old Tune, and utters with wild abandon:

> What if the best of our wages be
> An empty sleeve, a stiff-set knee,
> A crutch for the rest of our life - who cares?
> So long as the One Flag floats and dares?
> So long as the One Race dares and grows?
> Death - what is death but God's own rose? (83)

In the poem Last Post there is the English soldier who dies "in a rapture of wrath and a faith and pride" so that:

> The One Race ever might starkly spread
> And the One Flag eagle it overhead. (84)

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(81) W. E. Henley, Poems, p.228

(82) Joseph Chamberlain, Foreign & Colonial Speeches, Geo.Routledge & Sons Ltd. Manchester & New York, 1897, p.6.

(83) W. E. Henley, op.cit., p.235.

(84) Ibid. p.239.

It is, however, in his greatest imperial lyric that Henley draws together all his passions and feelings about England. The poem, Pro Rege Nostro, is a testament of the poet's faith in his country. It is the complete submergence of the individual to the will and power of the state in an almost religious devotion:

> What have I done for you,
> England my England?
> What is there I would not do,
> England my own? (85)

To the poet, service in the great imperial cause for an England which seeks to preserve the individual's freedom, results in the paradox of a humble submission to its will. A submission, however, which carries with it the satisfaction of the fierce action which Henley yearns so much for, and which he expressed in his poetry. Thus he can sing passionately,

> Ever the faith endures
> England my England:-
> Take and break us; we are yours
> England my own.
> Life is good, and joy runs high
> Between English earth and sky:
> Death is death; but we shall die
> To the Song on your bugles blown,
> England -
> To the stars on your bugles blown! (86)

This is the England which men could best serve in the action and sacrifice of war - this is the mighty England of Empire:

> ...with worlds to watch and ward,
> .....
> ...whose mailed hand keeps the keys
> Of such teeming destinies... (87)

This is the England Henley loves.

A by-product of the imperial sentiment which swept the country was the wild enthusiasm for the music hall as a place given to demonstrations

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(85) Ibid., p.230.

(86) Ibid., p.230.

(87) Ibid., p.231.

of imperial fervour. There were sung all the lusty songs of Empire and of the men who guarded it. As we have seen, the average Victorians loved to make themselves heard, and in no more colourful fashion than through these jingo songs which cropped up like mushrooms all over the country. All manner of hack writers, song writers, entertainers and almost anyone else with a sense of rhythm was eager to satisfy the public demand, and the music hall became a powerful force in the fostering of imperial sentiment. Such men as Henry Russell, the author of a song called Cheer Boys Cheer roused in great numbers of people, imperialist fervour, and enlisted thousands in the British Navy by his one song, Life on the Ocean Wave. As one writer puts it, "he did more by his music than a regiment of recruiting officers". (88)

Many of the poets of the day yielded to the demands for stimulating imperial ballads and Henley's poem Music Hall is representative of the blatant vigour which they often displayed. Such rousing choruses as:

> Storm along John! Storm along John!
> Frenchmen and Russians and Dutchman and Don
> Know the sea's yours from the coast to Canton!
> Storm along, storm along, storm along John! (89)

gave the Victorians good material for their singing bouts in the pubs, on the streets, at Primrose League meetings or wherever they else they had the opportunity. The influence of these rowdy ballads cannot be underestimated in the imperial scheme, and continual repetition of such beliefs as

> Half the world's yours and the rest may look on.

and

> Not in the best of the years that are gone,
> Has the star which is yours thus tremendously shone! (90)

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(88) Harry Furniss, Some Victorian Men, p.164

(89) Ibid. p.233.

(90) Ibid. p.234.

went a long way towards convincing the people of the might and power of their country.

Not all Englishmen, however, were enthusiastic about the music halls, and for the most part the middle class and the aristocracy considered them low entertainment. Undoubtedly they were, and their success depended on a cheap emotional appeal which satisfied the lower classes' desire to express their imperial fervour.

Throughout his whole life, Henley was an unquenchable Tory, and an admirer of Disraeli, and he gradually began to associate the broad imperial vision of the great Prime Minister with the Tory imperial policies. Whether Henley was drawn to Disraeli primarily by reason of the man's literary genius or his political beliefs is difficult to determine. Buckley states that Colvin's charge that Henley was a "Beaconsfieldian by a literary whim" (91), was not entirely unfounded, and there is probably some connection between the poet's admiration for the writer and his later acceptance of the imperialism which Disraeli represented. Chiefly, however, the Henleyan love of the activist life, and the violent social, political and literary action which characterized the imperialism of these years were the important factors. Buckley says that Henley rushed with enthusiasm upon receipt of Kipling's poems and read them to his office staff with great gusto. Here indeed, was the poetry of men in action - action through service to an Empire which practised the imperial policies of a great nation in action.

It has been suggested that Henley's imperialism, his manliness and his love of straightforward verse were natural in a strong man reacting to the decadent movement. This decadent or Fin de Siecle period, as it is called, is characterized by a great deal of activity in art and lit-

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(91) J. H. Buckley, William Ernest Henley, p.127

-erature, and also by a pride in material prosperity. Curiously enough, it reached its height when imperialism was also at its high water mark, and the suggestion in the relationship between the two cannot be overlooked. As we have seen Swinburne did not find it difficult to turn from the decadent sensual poetry of his youth to the imperial poetry of his later years.

It would seem therefore that imperialism and the philosophy of action which Henley so tenaciously held to was not so much a reaction to the forces of decadence as a part of them. The whole feeling of insecurity in England at this time, economically, religiously, and politically, suggests a conscious sense of the decadence of older traditions and trusted faiths. It was as if all the forces which the Victorians had so cherished had suddenly revealed their own weaknesses, and that the artificial tone of art, the hypocritical lip-service paid to religion and the blatant and gaudy jingoism of imperialism were defences against accepting the true decadent condition of what Victorian England had stood for. Holbrook Jackson tends to support this contention when he points out the passionate desire for new fields of conquest, for "new emotional and spiritual territories" (92) was a strong tendency of the period, and that decadence itself was:

> ...a form of imperialism of the spirit, arrogant, aggressive, waving the flag at human power over an ever wider and wider territory. (93)

Added to this half-awareness of decadence was also the consciousness that new forces were on their way in science, religion and politics and art, and that these forces would bring with them a greater emancipation of mankind. The higher aspirations of imperialism which sought to bring

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(92) Holbrook Jackson, The Eighteen Nineties, p.77.

(93) Ibid. p.77.

liberty and justice to all men everywhere is a part of this consciousness which managed to rise in hope above the pessimism and cynicism which characterized a substantial part of the decadent attitude. The decadent imperialism was the imperialism of commercial materialism and exploitation, and its grip firmly held the nation until it was destroyed in a spirit of revulsion after the Boer War which was to see a new sense of co-operation arise between Boers and English in South Africa. It might seem unusual in these years that there was such a paradoxical combination of decay and rebuilding so closely interrelated as to be indistinguishable.

Henley's work seems to be a part of this paradox, especially in his imperial verse. His reactionary militant Tory attitude appears inconsistant with his passion for individualism. But in an age which was itself paradoxical there were really no inconsistencies. It was possible for Swinburne the republican, Swinburne the decadent, to become Swinburne singing the praises of Victoria and jingoistic imperialism.

Henley's influence unquestionably was strong in the imperial scheme, but his work, like most of the other imperial poets was overshadowed by the power and popularity of Kipling. His "National Observer" never enjoyed great success and eventually failed despite its strong Tory leanings, but his poetry on the whole was well received. It was however, his personality which dominated, and he is likened by Buckley to Dr Johnson in the strength of his influence upon others. His imperial sentiments were never in question, and he required no ethical reason for England's imperial ventures; it was enough that she was representative of the power and action which he gloried in, and his highest aspiration for her is expressed in his desire:

That her Name as a sun among stars might glow,
Till the dusk of time with honour and worth: (94)

A poet of somewhat different character to Henley, but nevertheless a strong imperialist was Henry Newbolt (1862-1938). Newbolt by temperament differs considerably from Henley, and reveals a tendency towards reserve and meditation, and his imperial poetry does not possess much in common with Henley other than the undercurrent of feeling for England.

Newbolt chose to express his imperialism mainly through the traditions of England, especially those of the sea and the public school. As we have seen, imperialism had brought with it rising interest in the Navy and it is to the traditions of this service that Newbolt's poetry is largely dedicated. The popularity of his work can be attested to by the fact that his volume containing Admirals All went into its fourteenth edition, and his work was received with great enthusiasm by the critics who agreed that not since Tennyson's Ballad of the Revenge had England seen such spirited stirring sea poetry. What Kipling did for the soldier in the minds of the English people, Newbolt did for the sailor, and Legouis and Cazimian state that

> By virtue of their patriotic inspiration and central theme, the sea, the poems of Sir Henry Newbolt....rank next to those of Kipling. (95)

Newbolt found great inspiration in deeds of the past, and his poems gave life to heroic adventure performed in the cause of England. In Admirals All, he speaks of:

> Admirals all, for England's sake
> Honour be yours and fame!
> And honour, as long as waves shall break
> To Nelson's peerless name. (96)

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(94) W. E. Henley, op.cit., Last Post, p.239

(95) E.Legouis & L.Cazamian, A History of English Literature, p.1342

(96) Ibid. p.100.

He sees the naval feats of his own day as harking back to the glorious traditions which men like Drake, Raleigh and Nelson have created for Englishmen, and he calls to his compatriots in the poem Sailing of The Long Ships:

> O race of tireless fighters, flushed with a
> youth renewed
> Right well the wars of Freedom befit
> The Sea-king's brood; (97)

Such other poems as Drake's Drum, The Fighting Temeraire, and the Ballad of John Nicholson, all tend to stress the adventure and tradition of the navy in stirring and often blatant lines. On the whole, however, Newbolt's poetry does not have the same powerful suggestiveness of Kipling's or even Henley's. It stresses the imperial theme in a more reserved way, and on the whole is much less arrogant and coarse. There is a classic finish about many of these famous poems which gives them a poetic as well as imperialistic appeal. They capture the "hearts of oak" and the struggle of naval action as well as the tang of the sea in a strong sweep of pride which makes it easy to see how strongly they would have appealed to a nation caught in the throes of admiration for itself and a renewed pride in all that it had accomplished and stood for through the hundreds of years of its history.

The influence of this poetry of heritage, and the implication that the men of Victorian England were as great in deed and action as their illustrious forefathers is important in the imperialist movement, and Newbolt echoes this sentiment effectively in the words:

> Sons of the Island Race wherever ye dwell,
> Who speak of your fathers' battles
> with lips that burn. (98)

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(97) Ibid. p. 100.

(98) Henry Newbolt, The Island Race, p. 61.

Heated controversy was abroad at this time over the theories of race superiority, and it was inevitable that tradition would become an important point in this discussion. As one writer puts it :

> The imperialist feels a profound pride in the magnificent heritage of empire won by the courage and energies of his ancestry and bequeathed to him subject to the burden of many sacred trusts. (99)

There was a good deal of feeling over the problem of England discharging her duty to other nations, and long arguments pointed to imperial policy as both educational and morally bracing for the nation, while it endowed incalculable benefit upon the peoples who were brought under English rule. There was a philosophy of paternalism abroad which stressed this responsibility to the 'demi-Englands' as Henley calls them, in distant parts of the globe. The stress was on duty - the soldier's duty- the nation's duty - the Empire's duty. Everyone spoke and wrote very emotionally about duty.

Newbolt implies this responsibility in much of his poetry,and the great deeds are carried out by men doing only what is their duty. In the poem, The Quarter-Gunner's Yarn, where the story is told of Admiral Nelson being struck down in battle, Newbolt concludes it with Nelson's dying remark:

"Thank God! he kept saying, "my duty I've done". (100)

There was no duty equivalent to serving the Empire whether in peace or war, and much of the emotional feeling of imperialism was bound up with this conception of responsibility. It became a national characteristic and offered a more noble justification for imperialism by associating it with a spiritual quality. Individual duty was not dependent upon class, it was the highest possession of all from the Queen down, and

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(99) J.Lawson Walton, Imperialism, Contemporary Review, Vol. LXXV, p.306.

(100)Henry Newbolt, The Island Race, p.10.

from the proudest to the humblest. The Dean of Canterbury could write with enthusiasm,

> ...what sense of the absolute supremacy of duty, does war call forth even in the humblest and most ignorant soldiers... (101)

Military service was a high expression of that duty, and it was through the greater glory of England that men had to fulfill their destiny. It was the strength of such sentiment that made it possible for words such as these to be written:

> The youngest lad from the poorest peasant cottage is willing to take his life in his hand and sacrifice it without a murmur for his Queen and his country and his home. (102)

and gave meaning to the verse from the poem, The Sinking of the Victoria by T. E. Brown:

> Enough we know our duty, and we know to die
> .....
> Oh Queen 'tis thus
> For you we die, no matter where or when
> Or how we die, the while you say of us
> O nobly died! O glorious Englishmen. (103)

Most of the imperial poets found this subject to their liking and Newbolt was no exception. He often reveals it through the public school esprit de corps which he celebrates in many of his poems. By far the best known of these is Vitae Lampada which deals with the sense of duty instilled in the English character while in school - the sense of duty which challenges the individual to "Play up! play up! and play the game", for the sake of the game rather than the glory. This is the submergence of personal glory for the greater glory of the Empire, - the ideal with which Englishmen go to the field of battle and even in defeat when "England's far and honour's a name" they will still do their duty to the last, because duty is:

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(101) Rev. F.W. Farrar, Imperialism and Christianity, North American Rev. Vol.CLXXI, p.292.

(102) Ibid. p.292.

(103) T. E. Brown, Collected Poems, p.100

... the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Everyone of her sons must hear
And none that hears it dare forget. (104)

Such a poem as Clifton Chapel recounts the deeds of the school's students in the various wars for freedom in which England has taken part, and Newbolt succeeds in giving these poems a strong emotional appeal to the ideal of duty.

In the poem, The Guides at Cabul, the story is told of a handful of native Indian soldiers of the famous Guides Regiment who held the Residency until death after the Afghans had murdered the British Resident and all his suite. When the native soldiers are called upon to surrender, they ask defiantly:

"Is it we or the Lords we serve who have earned this wrong,
That you call us to flinch from the battle they bade us fight?" (105)

and then scornfully reply:

"Think ye the Guides will barter for lust of the light,
The pride of an ancient people in warfare bred?" (106)

It is in this call to duty which runs all through Newbolt's imperial verse that we see the strange mixture of arrogance and ideal, and it it is impossible not to recognize the higher ethical standard of his poems. He mixes both these elements in the lines:

To set the Cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honour, while you strike him down
The foe that comes with fearless eyes,
To count the life of battle good,
And dear the land that gave you birth,
And dearer yet the brotherhood
That links the brave of all the earth - (107)

Again there is the feeling of moral sincerity in the poem Vigil, where the poet appeals to his countrymen on the eve of a struggle to pray to

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(104) Henry Newbolt, Poems:New and Old, p.95.

(105) John Lang and Jean Lang, Poetry of Empire, p.347.

(106) Ibid.,p.347.

(107) Henry Newbolt, The Island Race,p.76.

their God to defend the right, and suggests that defeat is possible, a suggestion foreign to the jingo:

> So shalt thou rise when morning comes
> Rise to conquer or to fall
> Joyful bear the rolling drum
> Joyful hear the trumpet call.
> Then let memory tell thy heart
> "England! what thou wert, thou art!"
> Gird thee with thine ancient might
> Forth! And God defend the Right. (108)

A stronger tone prevails in his Hymn in Time of War and Tumult, when he calls the nation back to higher purposes:

> Remember not the days of shame
> The hands with rapine dyed,
> The wavering will, the baser aim,
> The brute material pride:
> .....
> Remember Lord, the years of faith
> The spirits humbly brave
> .....
> The race that strove to rule thine earth
> With equal laws unbought. (109)

In a day when "brute material pride" was a common attitude, this represents a strong appeal for a higher ideal and a consciousness of nobler purpose in the imperial mission. A good deal of controversy was raging over the imperial question by this time, and there were violent pros and cons as to its values and its aims. The divergent views which were held can be seen in many excerpts from contemporary magazines. One writer states with great sincerity:

> Imperialism is the creed of all who find in the military Empire the glory and strength of England. (110)

while another writes with equal sincerity that the true imperialism was:

> A flexible and considerate policy of guidance, of justice between natives and settlers, or reconciliation, emancipation and training for self-government. (111)

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(108) Ibid. p.3.

(109) Ibid. p.111.

(110) Frederick Harrison, Empire and Humanity, Fortnightly Rev.Vol.XXXIII p.296

(111) G. M. Young, Victorian England; Portrait of an Age, p.176

It might be argued that it is simple to find moral justification for almost any action no matter how base, and that anyone who chose to defend imperial policies on the basis of their higher purposes was nothing more than hypocrite. This was often the case. Much hypocrisy and high-blown sentiment was current about bringing light to backward people, simply to justify political trickery, and often barbarity; but it is impossible not to note that the idea of "commonwealth of nations" was growing in England, and that ideals of equality and justice were not entirely lost in the maelstrom of blatant imperialism. In the mid-eighties Lord Rosebery, when speaking on the subject of Australian Federation, and the suggestion that when Australia became a nation they might leave the Empire, he said:

> There is no need for any nation, however great, leaving the Empire, because the Empire is a commonwealth of nations. (112)

Undoubtedly the term did not have the full significance that it now has, but the conception of great nations equal within a commonwealth was taking shape. The British treatment of the conquered Boers which made it possible for a Boer to become president after only a few years of annexation to the Empire, speaks well for the development of the ideal.

Despite the general reserve of his tone, Newbolt could pen a lusty ballad filled with enthusiasm. The kind of poetry which easily found its way into the rousing men of Victorian England. A poem like The Gay Gordons is filled with all the traditional Highlander's swagger and gusto for battle as:

> Rising, roaring, rushing like the tide,
> (Gay goes the Gordon to a fight) (113)

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(112) Marquis of Crewe, Lord Rosebery, Vol. I, p.186

(113) Henry Newbolt, The Island Race, p.66

and the ballad The Fighting Temeraire captures the sailor's longing for battle:

> Oh! to see the linstock lighting,
> And to hear the round-shot biting,
> For we're all in love with fighting
> On the Fighting Temeraire. (114)

Undoubtedly much of Newbolt's success as an imperialist poet rested on his catering to the emotions strong in the people of imperial England. Like them, he loved everything English and exalted with them in the "strength and splendour of England's wars", (115) but at the same time he had a vision of the nobler purposes which could be achieved through the imperial mission. He speaks of faith in England but at the same time he is conscious of the importance of the individual. It is not the race making the man with Newbolt, but rather the man making the race - "what you are, the race will be", (116) he says. His special emphasis on the public school is a notable feature of his imperial poetry. He fully realized the strength of youth, and saw in the public school boy a "nation builder in some outpost of Empire" (117) and poems like The School at War and The Best School of All are filled with the noble deeds of Clifton's former students. He commemorates heroism in his poetry and the example he sets before young men of Victorian England is one in which the highest form of living is living to sacrifice. His poem Sacramentum Supremum closes with the expressions that:

> Life is no life to him that dares not die
> And death no death to him that dares to live. (118)

Newbolt, as Coulson Kernahan says, "moulded the soul of many a fighting man to patriotism" (119), and listed them in the imperial ranks, but

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(114) Ibid. p.37.

(115) Ibid., Ionicus, p.71

(116) Ibid. p.76.

(117) Coulson Kernahan, Six Famous Living Poets, p.105

(118) Henry Newbolt, Poems New and Old, p.92

(119) Coulson Kernahan, op.cit., p.98

behind his lines there is not the spirit of grasping materialism which imperialism often represented, but the love of the ideal of duty, and an adherence to a system which finds its genesis in Greek philosophy, the training of those who were to be leaders among their fellowmen in the highest form of sacrifice. These principles were incorporated into the Victorian traditions, and although much misguided use was made of them to further selfish ends and an ignoble imperialism, nevertheless the nobility of the ideals cannot be overlooked.

On the whole, Newbolt strikes a more ethical note than many of his fellow imperial poets, and his poetry is notably free from the primitive militarism of Henley, even though there is a similarity in their ideas. It is in the basis of duty that Newbolt finds his inspiration, and the interpretation which his age put upon the word helped contribute to the often rabid use made of it in his more blatant verse.

Another poet who not only brings a sense of higher ideals about his country, but out and out denounces the jingo imperialism of his day is William Watson (1858-1935). His anti-imperialistic attitude places him with Buchanan in a unique position among the poets of the day, who either avoided imperialism entirely or were mildly critical of it. Both Watson and Buchanan, however, are as fervent in their denunciations of it as other poets were in its praise. Watson's poetry enjoyed a certain amount of popularity because of the good quality of his work, but it began to wane after 1896 when he published a series of sonnets entitled The Purple East.

The general theme of these sonnets was based upon the very touchy question of the persecution of the Armenians by the Turks. This dispute in which the Turks were accused of practising all forms of atrocities on the Christians in Armenia had raised considerable controversy in England.

The government had taken the stand of not interfering because of their interest in Turkey. Britain's fear of Russian encroachment on the Mediterranean through the Black Sea stimulated them to support a strong and independent Turkey. The very fact that it was in Britain's interest not to interfere to stop the atrocities was sufficient for a good number of people who felt that there was little to choose between Turk and Armenian.

Of the minority who disapproved of England's stand, Watson was one, and he made impassioned pleas on behalf of the Armenians. It was very easy to be called unpatriotic in England at this time, for anyone who dared raise his voice against the accepted political policies was labelled a traitor. A jingo song called A Bunting Song written during the Boer War gives expression to this feeling:

> Three cheers for the red,white and blue,
> Pro Boers are futile and few,
> We run up the bunting
> All traitors confronting
> Hooray! (120)

Watson practically met this charge of traitor in the Armenian question and again in the Boer War. The lines from The Turk in Armenia shows his disillusionment with England when he says:

> We deemed of old thou held'st a charge from Him
> Who sits companioned by His seraphim
> To smite the wrongs with thy destined rod. (121)

He held throughout his life that England had an unquestioned responsibility towards leading other nations to higher ideals, and he felt that she had betrayed his confidence and the true destiny of England by allowing the horrors of the Armenian persecutions to continue.

Watson's voice was raised in opposition to the Boer War on the same grounds, and his attitude was received with great antagonism, and

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(120) Punch, Vol. CXVIII, p.453.

(121) William Watson, Poems, Vol.II,p.51.

many of his friends were greatly concerned about his position. To be a pro-Boer in England at this time was to ask for trouble, and mobs of people nightly descended upon any meetings which were suspected of pro-Boer sentiments, and violence often resulted. It was in this vein that Punch warned its readers in a short column headed "Don'ts" that to "make pro-Boer observations in railway carriages or other public places" was an "unhealthy practice". (122) The newspapers and other periodicals had gone to great lengths to arouse the people against the Boers, especially after the embarrassment of the initial defeats which the English armies suffered. The Boers were pictured as traitors to the white flag, robbers of the wounded, cruel to animals and so on.

England felt it necessary to gird all its might both militarily and emotionally, and there was much jingo verse produced about the calmness with which England was facing defeat, and about the strong silent nation steeling itself for a battle to the death. Swinburne saw fit to write a poem called Reverse, in which he reviews how England's "iron-tempered oak" threw its might against Europe and now faced a new challenge from a foe which had shown itself "bold in fight as bold in breach of trust", and he concludes it in a jingo tone of disparagement:

> But loathing more intense than speaks disgust
> Heaves England's heart, when scorn is bound to greet
> hunters and hounds whose tongue would lick
> their feet. (123)

The true condition of the nation however, was one of surprise and anger, and any pro-Boer elements were violently squelched. For years the English had been telling themselves about their marvellous Empire in song and story, and there was nothing but scorn for the insignificant Dutch Republic. Punch illustrates this swaggering confidence in the

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(122) Punch, Vol. CXVIII, p.166.

(123) Illustrated London News, Vol. CXV, p.678.

early days of the war with an anecdote called The Situation. It is a picture of two British workingmen looking at a map of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, and one says to the other:

> See that Pink Bill? That's our'n. See that
> green? That's their'n. It'll be all pink
> soon. (124)

and as one writer puts it, it was as if a

> ...couple of street scavengers had tried
> to hold up the Diamond Jubilee procession. (125)

Watson rather than throw himself into the jingo spirit against his convictions, chose to oppose it, and in his sonnet On Being Styled Pro-Boer, he gives his ideal of the England which he rejoices in:

> England! The England that rejoices to see
> Hellas unbound, Italy one and free;
> The England that had tears for Poland's doom,
> And in her heart for all the world room
> .....
> The immortal England whom I too have served
> Accounting her all living lands above
> In justice and in mercy and in love. (126)

Watson showed considerable courage in his attitude, and he drew his strength from his beliefs that the "my country right or wrong" jingoes were doing more harm to England than he was, and consequently were more disloyal. He felt that his own course of opposing that which he deemed unworthy would in the long run help England, and that to best honour her was to honour in her what was best.

That admiration for his country was none the less deep is proved by the passionate feeling and the simplicity of many of his lines. In the poem England My Mother, he proudly sings:

> England my mother,
> Wardress of waters,
> Builder of peoples,
> Maker of men. (127)

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(124) Punch, Vol. CXVII, p.226.

(125) Compton MacKenzie, Literature in my Time, p.103.

(126) William Watson, op. cit., Vol.II, p.86.

(127) Ibid. Vol.I, p.65.

Again, in Home-Rootedness he owns to insularity and speaks fervently of being "born of my mother England's mighty womb", (128) and in the poem Awakening, he describes her as the "hope of the world" and a "star among the nations". (129) Such feelings express his passion for the country, and they are not built on a narrow and bigoted outlook, but rather on a broader and deeper conception of the purpose of the nations, especially the stronger ones like England who of necessity must have greater responsibility. Watson had the power of vision to look out beyond the narrowness of an imperial fervour which could see glory in a materialistic expansion. In the sonnet The Inexorable Law he warns his countrymen that:

> We too shall pass, we too shall disappear
> Even as mighty nations that have waned
> And perished..... (130)

and he calls upon them to leave behind a noble rather than a sordid heritage so that:

> ...time, far hence shall hold our memory dear
> Let it be said: 'This Mistress of the Sword'
> And conquering prow, this Empire swol'n with spoils
> Yet served the human cause, yet strove for Man;
> Hers was the purest greatness we record;' (131)

Although Watson's poetry is not great poetry, such lines as these have a compelling force when they are considered in the light of the emotional madness and imperial pride of the times. There were the words of a man who had courage enough not to put his trust in "chariots" when the rest of the nation was doing just that. The poem Rome and Another draws a parallel between the British and the Roman Empires. It was almost inevitable that the contrast between the two should arise, and a good deal of discussion was abroad as to the differences and similarities of the two. It was generally agreed that the characteristics of Brit-

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(128) Ibid. Vol.II, p.40

(129) Ibid. Vol.II, pp.82-83.

(130) Ibid. Vol.II, p.63.

(131) Ibid. Vol.II, p.63.

-ish imperialism differed greatly from those of the Roman Empire. Whereas Roman imperialism had been autocratic and cruel, serving only the interests and glory of Rome, British imperialism was:

> ...government, not for the sake of fortune to individuals, or even glory to the nation, but for the sake of civilization - in other words, for the diffusion of peace and justice over regions where these blessings have hitherto been unknown. (132)

Thus, according to the Victorians, there was considerable difference, and where there was no justification for Roman imperialism there was a great deal for British. Watson, however, did not believe in this difference, and in the poem Rome and Another, he likened England to Rome in asking "dominion over all things", and strikes a warning note in the lines:

> Imperial Power, that hungerest for the globe,
> Restrain thy conquering feet,
> Lest the same Fates that spun thy Purple Robe
> Should weave thy winding sheet. (133)

He was keenly conscious of the transience of world pomp, and sought to draw the nation back to the more solid and lasting concepts of national life. He felt that great literature could be one of the sustaining powers of a nation when he sings:

> Nations are mortal
> Fragile is greatness;
> Fortune may fly thee,
> Song shall not fly. (134)

Despite these lines, however, Watson is not entirely free from the jingo pride of Empire. Such a sonnet as Our Eastern Treasure is a strong objection to the Empire risking the loss of India, because if they did there would be:

> A brightness gone from out those starry eyes
> A splendour from the constellated brow. (135)

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(132) The Literary Inspiration of Imperialism, Living Age, Vol.CCXXV, p.803

(133) William Watson, Poems, Vol.II, p.90

(134) Ibid., England My Mother, Vol.I, p.68

(135) Ibid. Vol.II, p.42.

It would almost seem as if he was an enthusiastic advocate of the imperial expansion in these lines from the same piece:

> The sense of greatness keeps a nation great
> And mighty they who mighty can appear. (136)

This was in the sentiment of the day when "appearing mighty" was an important part of the international game, so that nations might be warned against tampering with others' interests. Thus exhibitions of armed and naval might and the interchange of Royal visits between the various powers were always times of hysterical enthusiasm and could always be counted on to arouse new imperial interest. Watson does not seem to be entirely free from an inordinate pride in England as Empire, and in the sonnet Nightmare he records how he dreamed that England had been conquered and her greatness had become only a tale to tell to children:

> How England once, before the years of bale,
> Throned above, trembling, puissant, grandiose, calm,
> Held Asia's richest jewel in her palm;
> And with unnumbered isles barbaric, she
> The broad hem of her glistening robe impearl'd;
> Then, when she wound her arms about the world,
> And had for vassal the obsequious sea. (137)

There is an evident feeling of her splendour of bigness here, equally as much as in the more ardent imperialists. Watson, however, when explaining such poems in later years said of them:

> Their patriotism, being that of youth, was perhaps
> more vehement than chastened..... (138)

These flights of imperial enthusiasm, however, were few, and the bulk of the poet's political verse is strongly liberal, and anti-imperial. His poem The True Imperialism is almost a testament of the policies being recommended by both the liberal and socialistic elements in England at that time. In it he appeals for more concentration on the country itself, and for renewed efforts to improve the lot of the people of

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(136) Ibid. Vol.II, p.42.

(137) Ibid. Vol.II, p.43.

(138) William Watson, Selected Poems, p.315

England:

> Here, while the tide of conquest rolls,
> Against the distant golden shore,
> The starved and stunted human souls
> Are with us more and more.
>
> Vain is your science, vain your art,
> Your triumphs and your glories vain,
> To feed the hunger of their heart
> And famine of their brain.
>
> Your savage deserts howling near,
> Your wastes of ignorance vice and shame -
> Is there no room for victories here,
> No fields for deeds of fame?
>
> Arise and conquer while ye can
> The foe that in your midst resides,
> And build within the mind of man,
> The Empire that resides. (139)

The glory and pomp of imperialism had become a substitute for social reform, and had stayed for a while the progress of the country towards better internal standards. Rhodes, who had seen the surging energy of the hungry and unemployed masses in London had said:

> ...if you want to avoid civil war you must become imperialists... (140)

This significant statement suggests how much the imperial sentiment offset the growing interest of the English people for internal changes. Thus the Empire was to become a cause which would compete for public attention with revolutionary programs, and under the initiative of the privately owned press the imperial sentiment was gilded to the tastes of the masses until it had become a vast unthinking outlet for energy which might otherwise have proved dangerous.

Watson's poetry is often of creditable quality as poetry, and although he is by no means a great poet, his importance lies in his running against the popular tide of interest. There was no organized political

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(139) William Watson, Poems, Vol.II, p.92

(140) Granville Hicks, Figures of Transition, p.298

sentiment or groups which could be labelled anti-imperialist,although the liberal element stood opposed on the whole to the violent imperial policies which the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists carried out. Compromise was strong everywhere, and Watson sometimes followed that route, especially in his earlier works, but his abiding hatred of imperialism appeared in his later poems, and his dominant tone is opposed to the materialistic expansion which he saw going on around him.

His love of England cannot be doubted - not,however, the England of material grasping -but the England of justice and right. He sees the faults, and speaks of them as in the poem Restored Allegiance,

> Dark is thy trespass,deep be thy remorse
> O England! Fittingly thine own feet bleed,

but he can finally exclaim:

> O England should'st thou one day fall,
> Justice were henceforth weaker throughout
> All the world and Truth less passionately free
> And God the poorer for thine overthrow. (141)

Watson was not alone,however, in his stand against imperialism, for Robert Buchanan(1841-1901), a poet of Scottish birth, was a violent opponent of imperialism. He could see nothing noble in its aims at all, and denounced it bitterly for its unchristian materialism and especially for what he saw as hypocrisy in the imperialist's attempts to justify his attitude. Buchanan was far more sucessful as a dramatist than as a poet, and much of his poetry cannot be ranked very highly. His flair for the dramatic,however, is well adapted to his cause as an anti-imperialist poet, and he uses it frequently to obtain vigorous verse if not always excellent poetry.

Buchanan's religious beliefs were founded on the dogged Calvinistic ideals of the Scots, and he emphasizes how far the nations have

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(141) F.Wedmore and M.Wedmore, Poems of the Love and Pride in England p.285

departed from the true ideals of Christianity. His condemnations of imperialism not only appeared in poetry, but also in articles, and he attacks men like Kipling, the clergy who had turned imperialist, the political leaders and the people themselves upon whose ignorance he believes it was possible for others to build the imperial sentiment. As with Watson, there is no doubting his patriotism to England, and in one of his public declarations he sets forth his creed. He refuses to be a patriot in the jingo fashion of the day. He strongly defends his patriotism, but equally avers that he would never commit himself to following

> ...the ravings of a howling political majority, excited to a frenzy by ignorant leaders and their attendant nigger minstrels.... (142)

His patriotism as Stodart-Walker says, was

> ....turned to a key rather foreign to the intelligence manufactured under our modern imperialist environment.(143)

His poem Victory shows his resentment at the accusations that he did not love his country and his flag:

> Not love the dear old Flag ? not bless
> This England, sea and shore ?
> O England, if I loved thee less,
> My song might praise thee more. (144)

Like Watson he felt that the jingo was not the true patriot,and that he was bringingEngland into a state of moral disgrace and degeneracy. He felt an instinctive pride in Englishmen, and describes them as not only "brave, but magnanimous and noble",(145) but the frenzied emotions and the hooliganism exhibited by the masses at their imperial worst disgusted him, and he talks disparagingly of

> ....the mob(who) promised a merry time by the governing class..dances to patriotic war tunes while...the conservative working man exchanges

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(142) Robert Buchanan, The Ethics of Criticism, Living Age, Vol. CCXXIV,p.734.

(143) A.Stodart-Walker, Robert Buchanan,The Poet of Modern Revolt,p.290.

(144) Robert Buchanan,Complete Poetical Works, Vol.II,p.320.

(145)Robert Buchanan, The Voice of the Hooligan, Living Age,Vol. CCXXIV,p.7.

> his birthright of freedom and free thought for
> a pat on the head from any little rump-fed Lord
> that steps his way and spouts the platitudes of
> Cockney patriotism. (146)

and he reminds them in verse of their best and worst:

> Liegeman of Bess the Virgin
> Heirs of the Harlot Nell!
> Our once bright blood hath mix'd with mud
> More oft than song need tell. (147)

It is his hatred of the rank materialism which he saw masquerading under a holy crusade that is most deeply aroused. His main attack is launched against the clergy for their support of imperialism which he sees as cheapening the people and making them lose their English qualities. His attack is launched mainly against the Established Church which he says having been:

> ...deprived of every conscience which accompanied honest belief, supports nearly every infamy of the moment in the name of Christianity which it long has shifted quietly overboard. (148)

In his poem The Image In the Forum he speaks of the Christus-Jingo as the object of worship, who "holds the moneybag and the sword", and he says:

> This God hath ta'en Thy heritage,
> And stolen Thy sweet and stainless Name
> To him we crawl and bend the knee
> Naming Thy Name but scorning Thee. (149)

A prominent clergyman of the time expressed an opinion about imperialism which, if it can be accepted would strengthen the criticism levelled at the Church's stand on imperialism. The Dean of Canterbury defines it:

> ...as a national duty and policy which maintains
> that we are bound to uphold, even at the cost of
> war, and in spite of all hazards, the Empire over
> vast regions which the Providence of God has
> placed under our dominion and immediate influence. (150)

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(146) Ibid. p.2.

(147) Robert Buchanan, Complete Poetical Works, Vol.II p.320

(148) Robert Buchanan, The Voice of the Hooligan, p.2.

(149) Robert Buchanan, Complete Poetical Works, Vol.II, p.318.

(150) Rev.F.W.Farrar, Imperialism and Christianity, North American Rev.Vol.CLXXI p.289.

He finds that the Boer War is a just struggle for England, and on behalf of those of his people who were alarmed over the causes of the war, he "ventured to approve" the following lines:

> Peace,peace, peace with vain and silly song
> That we do no ill ourselves when we wink at other's wrong;
> That to turn the second cheek is the lesson of the cross,
> To be learned by calculation of the profit and the loss
> Go home, you idle teachers, you miserable creatures
> The cannons are God's preachers when the time is
> ripe for war! (151)

Unquestionably the clergymen played an important part in fostering the imperial spirit, and Buchanan is rightly aroused. Their participation in the riotous celebrations, their sermons on behalf of Empire, their interest and activity in such groups as the Primrose League, all point to active co-operation. That many were opposed is undoubtedly true,but the overpowering sentiments of the people and government made the church's position an awkward one.

Buchanan is vigorously opposed to the hypocrisy of the clergymen's position. He sees the paradox of the two doctrines of Imperialism and Christianity - one supposed to ignore national boundaries and know no differences of race, while the other making much of racial differences and territorial boundaries. Added to this was the philosophy of the inferiority of other peoples which imperialism subscribed to,and which resulted in Carman's criticism that:

> ....it teaches the essential inequality of men,
> the duty of recognizing that inequality, the
> duty of doing unto others precisely what you
> hope they will not be able to do unto you. (152)

and although the missionary may call them brothers, "if they demand brotherhood from the soldier, they are shot as 'rebels' ",(153)

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(151) Ibid.,p.292.

(152) A.B.Carman, The Ethics of Imperialism, p.10

(153) Ibid., p.12.

To Buchanan, who saw imperialism only as a lust for conquest and mercenary militarism, the position of any religious group who not only tolerated, but supported it was impossible. He hated to think of the idea of the oppression of the weak by the strong - the might is right preached by Henley - and in his poem The Song of the Slain, he says:

> This is the Song of the Weak,
> Trod 'neath the heel of the Strong!

and after speaking of the "martyred races" whose lands and herds and gold are stolen, he hits at the conception of the inferiority of these peoples:

> Because the leaves of the trees are black 'tis
> meet that they should fall! (154)

His idea of the equality of man is expressed in the poem, The Union

> Justice to all, and first to those
> Who speak our common speech -
> Help to our brethern great or small,
> Free thought, free laws, for each. (155)

and this is tied up in his mind with the ideal of imperialism which is

> ...to diffuse light - not darken the sunshine -
> to feed the toiling millions not immolate them;
> to free man, not to enslave him; to consecrate
> and not desecrate... (156)

Buchanan's ideal is essentially Christian, and is more idealistic than realistic. He could under no circumstances see the imperialist nationalistic policies bringing about such things as peace, justice and right, no matter how sincerely the imperialist pleaded that his aims were essentially those of the poet. To him imperialism was the power of the sword which brought death and destruction to other peoples and debased the nobility of the English character.

Buchanan's A Song of the Jubilee stands in paradoxical contrast to many of the subservient and insincere paeans brought out by hundreds of poets and would-be poets to the honour of the Queen. He imitates the jingo-type of verse with its raucous chorus, and at the same time does

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(154) Robert Buchanan, Complete Poetical Works, Vol.II, p.322.

(155) Ibid. Vol.II, p.332.

(156) Robert Buchanan, The Voice of the Hooligan, Living Age, Vol. CCXXIV p.12

not spare the nation his criticism at a time when national feeling was running high. Such choruses as:

> With a heigh! and a ho!
> And a British three times three,
> Though the faith hath fled and our
> Lord lies dead
> We keep this Jubilee!
> .....
> With a heigh! and a ho!
> And a British three times three,
> Still sword in hand 'neath the Cross we stand
> And keep this Jubilee! (157)

were by no means music to the ears of a nation which preferred to hear verses of the tenor of:

> Princes form in array!
> Great ye are and greater may be;
> But only guards and vassals today
> To the Lady enshrined in duty and love;
> Pacing forth on her way
> In weakness of age and power above
> All words we can sing or say. (158)

Buchanan's honest sincerity, however, could never permit him any hypocritical or obsequious expression which his own heart did not tell him was true. Like Watson, Buchanan is conscious of the passing value of pomp and circumstance and his poem Old Rome opens with the lines:

> Dust! and we too, who now adjust
> Our pomp and pride, shall be as dust. (159)

He is never convinced that the imperialist can bring about what he is seeking for England or the world, and Buchanan's vision, like that of Tennyson's in its more inspired moments knows no national boundaries or age:

> Under the bloodless Flag we stand
> Which martyr bards unfurl'd,
> Heart linked to heart, hand joined to hand,
> The freedom of the World! (160)

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(157) Robert Buchanan, Complete Poetical Works, Vol.II, p.320

(158) 22nd June, Blackwoods, Vol. CLVI, p.887.

(159) Robert Buchanan, op. cit., Vol.II, p.338.

(160) Ibid. Vol.II, p.333.

Buchanan was a man of strong independence of mind, as his whole attitude to imperialism reveals. He did not fear the madness of the crowd in their imperial fervour, but stuck to his ideas with tenacity, looking ever out for higher truth than national interests could supply.

Although a large number of Victorian poets were indefatigible in their plucking of the imperial string, it is noticeable that many of the better poets avoided it or at least made only passing reference to it in odd poems.

Francis Thompson (1860-1907), who stands high in literary repute, wrote occasional imperial poems, but mostly on request of various editors of magazines who had an audience to satisfy. He never sings imperialism for imperialism's sake, and when he does touch the topic it is with reserve and with little enthusiasm for the imperial sentiment. His poem, Cecil Rhodes, written to commemorate the death of the renowned Empire builder, strikes a restrained note, and Thompson's attitude towards imperialism is voiced in the lines in which he declares that his admiration for Rhodes is not on the "baser things" or

> Not for all which commands
> The loud world's clapping hands
> To which cheap press and cheaper
> patriots bend;
> But for the dreams... (161)

He saw Rhodes as a man with vision and he celebrated the power of the visionary rather than the man of imperial action. His contribution to the Jubilee festivities was an Ode For the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and it is not a senseless adulation, but rather a reserved glorification of the dead who had achieved greatness during the Queen's long reign. His poem Peace, written at the conclusion of the Boer War,

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(161) Francis Thompson, Poems, p.253

is by no means in the spirit of Mafeking, but rather a warning against a return to the old ways of life, and suggests that the English cannot

> Resume the arms of Thy false Dalila, Gold
> Shameful and no wise fair! (162)

Outside of these poems, Thompson cared little about the imperial sentiment and his indifference and reserve suggest that the whole imperial adventure was more obnoxious than attractive.

George Meredith (1828-1909), well known in the fields of prose and poetry, wrote a few imperial poems, but they carried none of the jingoism of the day. He warns England against grabbing too much in the poem Outside the Crowd, and in such poems as The Labourer, England Before the Storm and Trafalgar Day, he expresses pride in his country and proclaims the hope that she will stand for right and justice.

Many other poets of quality such as Clough, Morris and the Rossettis showed little interest in imperialism, and it was to a great extent a Roman Holiday for the minor writers. Innumerable scribblers turned poets when imperialism reached its height, and never a day or a week passed but some new poem was appearing in the newspapers or magazines by names unheard of in any poetic connection. Patriotic anthologies were hastily compiled, and paper-covered collections of imperial poems and songs were everywhere available. It was indeed the heydey of the minor poet, who never before had enjoyed such popularity. Standing high above all, however, was Rudyard Kipling, whose power to mould imperial sentiment was not equalled by any other writer major or minor.

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(162) Ibid. p.251.

Chapter Five

Kipling and Imperialism

Undoubtedly no other Imperial poet enjoyed the phenomenal success and personal popularity which Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) experienced. When the English public discovered Kipling, considerable consciousness of Empire had already been aroused, but the ten years before the Boer War was the high point of imperial feeling, and no other person, writer or politician, did so much to encourage it as Kipling.

It was this accord with the political sentiment of the masses that contributed greatly to Kipling's rise as well as other personal qualities. Disraeli's political imperialism and Tennyson's more cultured approach had never been quite enough to give the individual a feeling of importance in the imperial scheme. People were well aware that there was an army and a navy, but they thought of them in terms of abstract power and prestige - never in terms of human beings. The colonies were distant countries tributary to England, but they were never interpreted in the light of the common brotherhood which Kipling managed to convey. Thus it was in the humanizing of these great forces that Kipling succeeded where others had not.

Added to this was the strong appeal which India had for the English people. It was a great land of mystery, where many Englishmen carved out careers for themselves and grew wealthy, and where the soldier had won great glory. Kipling wrote about these Indian affairs which the public were interested in, but of which they knew little or nothing. The Englishman was feeling the power of his nation - feeling that he was master of the world. It was Kipling who kindled the emotionalism which was linked with the pride of such a conception.

Over and above these political and social considerations, there was the power of Kipling's style. Kipling had been a journalist in India, with the "Civil and Military Gazette" at Lahore. He had shown all the essential qualities of the journalist in a remarkable power of observation and an ability to give quick and effective colouring to his writing. He was able to become highly excitable over the more transient and shallow aspects of life, and was able to give to mediocre and commonplace events an apparent vitality and excitement which made them seem like the most important things which had ever happened. Kipling's brief, snappy, and stirring and rhythmic poetry was completely adapted to the mood of the readers who had been well conditioned by newspapers and music halls to the characteristics which much of Kipling's poetry displayed. It could be sung or strummed to a banjo or shouted to home-made tunes, and it had the added advantage of expressing ideas dear to the hearts of the people.

In the Song of the Banjo, Kipling describes the banjo as the "war drum of the white man round the world" (1), and then gives a remarkably good description of what his own imperial poetry did for the people:

> And the tunes that mean so much to you alone -
> Common tunes that make you choke and blow your nose,
> Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan, -
> I can rip your very heartstrings out with those;
> With the feasting, and the folly, and the fun -
> And the lying and the lusting and the drink,
> And the merry play that drops you, when you're done
> To the thoughts that burn like iron if you think. (2)

Kipling also represents a contrast to the poets who were lost in the world of languid and pessimistic ideas in which Pater and Wilde were the leaders. Kipling like Henley found little enthusiasm for these

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(1) Rudyard Kipling, Collected Verse, p.19

(2) Ibid. p.19.

literary dandies, and he set the pace for many of the imperial authors - the men of action. Severe attacks on his work by such well known critics and writers as Francis Adams and Robert Buchanan tended to bring him more to the attention of the audience he was seeking to reach, and his work spread like wildfire throughout England. Many of the criticisms accused him of writing nothing but a loud and brazen jingle meaning nothing, while others felt that he was England's first naturalistic poet. Opinion was widely divided, but it all had very little effect on Kipling's popularity which grew at an amazing pace.

Of his imperialism Kipling is reported by Chevrillon as saying:

> As to my notions of imperialism, I learned them from men who mostly cursed their work, but always carried it through to the end under difficult surroundings without help or the hope of acknowledgement. (3)

and undoubtedly his Indian observation of both the men of the army and the civil service bore this out. It is to these individuals in particular that Kipling turns in his early imperial poetry in the Departmental Ditties and Barrack-Room Ballads. In these, aside from his criticisms of government inefficiency and army red tape, he expresses the human emotions in a language understandable to the Cockney in its coarseness and straightforward realism. These poems caught on quickly. Thousands of people memorized many of their lines, and to quote Kipling, became the rage as

> The cadences of Kipling's 'Barrack-Room Ballads' sent city readers singing and chanting back to their offices. (4)

Not only did the lilting rhythm appeal, but interest was aroused among Englishmen for their kinfolk in far parts of the Empire either as sol-

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(3) A. Chevrillon, Three Studies in English Literature, p.20

(4) Amy Cruse, After the Victorians, p.116.

-diers or administrators. The meaning of Empire had increased significance. Buchanan attempts to explain the success of these verses which he considered lewd and vulgar by accusing the people of apathy and being too

> ...idle and uninstructed to study works of any length or demanding any contribution of serious thought... (5)

and also to the rising military spirit of the day.

The military spirit must be appreciated if an understanding of the success of some of Kipling's poetry is to be attained. Security of Empire was an important question of the day, and the maintenance of imperial power rested upon a keen interest in military matters. Kipling's work in this direction is paramount, and it is he who brings to the heart of the English people the soldier in action - the 'Tommy Atkins' who is just another human with his faults like anybody else. There is no attempt on Kipling's part to gloss over the common soldier. The heroism of the man in khaki is accentuated because he's just an ordinary person doing great deeds, and that an ordinary Englishman could do such noble acts increased the Englishman's pride. The fact that the people were of a militant nature and glorified fierce action, made Kipling's poems almost a testament of their faith - a faith in military might and Empire.

In the poem, Tommy, Kipling pleads the cause of the common soldier with the suggestion that in time of need he is scorned, but in time of war becomes a man of importance:

> For it's Tommy this an' Tommy that,
> an Tommy wait outside;
> But it's "Special Train for Atkins"
> When the trooper's on the tide -
> The troopship's on the tide, my boys,
> the troopship's on the tide,
> O it's "Special Train for Atkins" when
> the trooper's on the tide. (6)

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(5) Robert Buchanan, The Voice of the Hooligan, p.4

(6) Rudyard Kipling, op.cit., p.335

Kipling did not seek to endow the soldier with the nobility of higher aims as a warrior of liberty and a new Sir Galahad; he faced the truth that these were human beings living under trying circumstances and that they were moved often by their baser nature. The poem Loot, is a good example both of this fact and of the jingoistic type of banjo-twanging which was Kipling's forte. In the uneducated Cockney dialect a soldier sings the praise of looting, and although he admits that the"service rules are 'ard and from such we are debarred", nevertheless he says:

I'll learn you plain an' clear 'ow to pay your-
self for fightin' overtime.

and the advice follows in the rowdy chorus:

Loo! loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo! loot! loot!
loot!
Ow the loot!
Bloomin' loot!
That's the thing to make the boys git up an' shoot!
It's the same with dogs and men,
If you'd make 'em come again
Clap 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot!
Whoopee! tear 'im puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu!
Loot! loot! loot! (7)

Kipling's stark realism does not shrink from the brutal aspects of war, and he often brings them out in his poems. In the Young British Soldier, the poet is giving advice to army recruits. He suggests that the young soldier keep away from the "grog" that "rots your guts", (8) and finally shows his striking almost brutal realism when he advises:

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains
And the women come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier
Go,go,go like a soldier etc.,.... (9)

This grim picture was in no way a drawback to enthusiasm for the military

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(7) Ibid.,p.355.

(8) Ibid.,p.366.

(9) Ibid.,p.367.

life, and in an age when the more gruesome side of war was advertised as all the more glorious, such poetry thrilled rather than repulsed. Despite the crudities of these individual pictures, Kipling kept before the people the part which the soldier played in the work of Empire. In the poem, The Widow at Windsor, he imprints this on the people of his day:

> Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,
> For 'alf o' Creation she owns;
> We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword
> 'an the flame,
> 'An we've salted it down with our bones. (10)

Again, in The Widow's Party a character called Johnnie outlines the difficulties he has had with food and life in the army, but when asked what the end of it all was it seems that:

> We broke a King and we built a road -
> A court-house stands where the regiment good.
> And the river's clean where the raw blood flowed
> When the Widow give the party.
> (Bugle: Ta-rara-rara-ra-rara!) (11)

There is in his poetry this sense of restlessness, and a clear and unmistakable appeal to the romantic soul of the man of action. Kipling gives colour and reality to the exciting life in strange lands, and in Mandalay he voices a Cockney soldier's dissatisfaction with "wastin' leather on these gritty pavin' stones", and expresses the desire for the East:

> Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best
> is like the worst,
> Where there aren't no Ten Commandments and a man
> can raise a thirst. (12)

The same notion is expressed in the poem Chant-Pagan in the lines:

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(10) Ibid. p.361.

(11) Ibid. p.375.

(12) Ibid. p.371.

I will arise an' get 'ence
I will trek South and make sure
If it's only my fancy or not
That the sunshine of England is pale,
And the breezes of England are stale. (13)

The search for the new and the exciting- the ever-widening frontiers- the curiosity about far lands are all expressed in Kipling's poetry and found a place in the hearts of a people who felt as he did. His poem Sestina of the Tramp Royal, gives the fullest expression of this feeling:

It's like a book,I think,this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another - 'likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all. (14)

Kipling did not shrink from realistically presenting his militarism to the Victorians because he realized that they could take their blood and struggle in stride. He gave greater meaning to the trappings of a military empire- the stirring drums,uniforms,exaltation of military deeds,and they in turn gave greater meaning to imperial power.

That Kipling was not solely responsible for the growth of this military spirit is certain, but his contribution was great. Amy Cruse quotes Henry Nevinson as saying:

....military enthusiasm was rising higher and higher,inspired partly by the writings of Kipling,Stevenson and Henley, but chiefly by ignorance of war. (15)

The paradox is that Kipling himself had seen very little actual fighting and after he did see it in the Boer War he suffered some disillusionment because he could find none of the glamour which he had so fervently described. The soldier on the whole felt that Kipling was a friend to him,and this was equally true of the sailor. There are many instances of tributes being paid to him by soldiers and seamen, and an example of

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(13) Ibid.,p.437.

(14) Ibid.,p.10.

(15) Amy Cruse, Op.cit.,p.119.

this appeared in the verses of a private who published a poem in the "Cape Times" on Kipling's arrival in South Africa. The poem, called An Experiment in Imitation, pays tribute to Kipling as the patron of the man in the ranks:

> But you're our own particular author, you're our
> patron and our friend
> You're the poet of the cussword and the swear,
> You're the poet of the people where the red-mapped
> lanes extend..... (16)

Kipling made many visits to the army and the navy, and on such occasions he would invariably read his own poetry. On his visit to the flagship Majestic, for example, he read The English Flag and Soldier and Sailor, after which the massed bands of the fleet broke out with "For he's a jolly good fellow". The whole incident was celebrated later in a poem called The Navy to Kipling in which the writer paid tribute to the poet's wisdom:

> He came to see us (that is old)
> Ten thousand more have done the same,
> And drunk with power they couldn't hold
> Have gone as empty as they came
> .....
> He came to see us (that was now)
> He saw the meaning through the task;
> Instinctive too, the larger view
> And found the brain behind the mask. (17)

Not only the soldier and sailor are of interest to Kipling, but everyone shares in the country's destiny. In the poem Lost Legion, Kipling sings the song of the civilian pioneer:

> ...Legion that never was 'listed
> That carries no colours or crest
> But split in a thousand detachments,
> Is breaking the road for the rest. (18)

The genesis of Kipling's militarism, aside from his love of action, is to be found, as Auden suggests, in the fact that he does not see the

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(16) An Experiment in Imitation, Critic, Vol.XXXII, p.184.

(17) G.Stuart Bowles, The Navy to Kipling, Academy, Vol.LV, p.123.

(18) Rudyard Kipling, op. cit. p.147.

threat to his civilization coming from within the civilization itself, but rather from the outside. It was inconceivable to the Victorians that there were any seeds of decadence in their way of life - it all seemed too splendid and powerful. For Kipling, as well as the rest of his compatriots, England was a

> ...citadel of light surrounded by a great darkness full of malignant forces, and only maintained through the centuries by everlasting vigilance, will power and sacrifice. (19)

Thus the important figure of history becomes the guardian who were the men of the army and the navy. Kipling is willing to look at their weaknesses and forgive them - even encourage them - as long as they are ready to make the sacrifice for the preservation of the Empire which he sees as necessary to the preservation of civilization. God had revealed the light of life to the Englishman and had centred all the great achievements on England. Kipling in his poem A Song of the English expresses this satisfaction in the lines:

> Fair is our lot - O goodly is our heritage!
> (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!)
> For the Lord our God Most High
> He hath made the deep as dry,
> He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the earth! (20)

It was inevitable that God and the moral element would enter Kipling's ideas of Empire both by reason of his background and by the general attitude of the times. Kipling's religious heritage was drawn from the Wesleyan teachings with all their stern emphasis upon a God of justice and judgement, and their implicit adherence to the doctrine of faith and works. The Victorians had long cherished this religion, but with the gradual breakdown of religious authority this emphasis had been shifted

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(19) W. H. Auden, The Poet of Encirclement, The New Republic, Vol.CIX, p.579

(20) Rudyard Kipling, op. cit., p.117.

to the state, and much of the imperial policy became bound up with the idea of England's moral responsibility to other nations.

Kipling's poem The White Man's Burden is a fundamental expression of the prevalent attitude, and he issues a challenge to England to

> Take up the White Man's Burden -
> Ye dare not stoop to less -
> Nor call too loud on freedom
> To cloak your weariness. (21)

Other races of men were regarded as inferior, especially the coloured peoples, and they are the

> ...new-caught sullen peoples,
> Half-devil and half-child. (22)

These were the people who had

> ...thought of nothing, invented nothing, built nothing and founded nothing, (who) live on more like evil children or animals with human forms than like men with intellects and souls. (23)

and it was inevitably the duty of the white man who had advanced so far

> ...that he is almost bewildered by the rushing multitude of his acquirements, who has made himself through the favour of God a restrained and self-controlling human being.. (24)

to bring progress to these inferior peoples and to "set the whole race of man free to work the destiny intended for him." (25)

Kipling charges them with a higher responsibility than mere commercial exploitation which so often was the "white man's burden" inflicted on the native peoples, and he bids them:

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(21) Ibid. p.320.

(22) Ibid. p.320.

(23) White Man's Burden, Spectator, Vol.LXXXII, p.194.

(24) Ibid. p.193.

(25) Ibid. p.193.

Fill the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease; (26)

Kipling warns the people that they will receive no love in exchange for their efforts and will suffer:

The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard - (27)

This sentiment appears somewhat hypocritical in the light of the merciless exploitation that was often carried on by the 'saviours' of civilization, and which often resulted in native uprisings and the savage killings of English soldiers and civil servants. Much indignation was kept alive in England against such uprisings, and many of the tales and poems popular in that day recorded the struggles of a handful of Englishmen, endowed with all the characteristics of Christian courage and nobility, and English tenacity, holding out against hordes of inhuman barbarians.

That England was the Promised Land was a certainty to Kipling. It was the guidance of Providence which led Englishmen to the ends of the earth to find the treasures which had been held back until Englishmen were ready to receive them. The poem The Explorer is written in this vein as Kipling outlines the immense commercial significance of the distant lands where he watched:

...unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand head an hour;
Counted leagues of water frontage through the axe-ripe woods
that screen 'em -
Saw the plant to feed a People - up and waiting for the power
.....
Ores you'll find there, wood and cattle; water-transit sure
and steady;
(That should keep the railway rates down)
coal and iron at your doors... (28)

All this must have been reassuring to the middle-class whose life depended upon trade, and especially when they were told that all of it had

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(26) Rudyard Kipling, op.cit., p.320.

(27) Ibid. p.321.

(28) Ibid. p.25.

been waiting especially for Englishmen to come and get it:

> God took care to hide that country till he judged
> His people ready,
> Then He chose me (the Explorer) for His Whispers, and
> I've found it and it's yours! (29)

Kipling was not blind to the value of commerce to the nations, and he also sees it as a binding force between the component parts of the Empire. In the poem Coastwise Lights he speaks of the trading ships from various parts of the Empire and draws a very effective analogy in describing them as:

> Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave
> us main to main. (30)

Kipling's ideas of the destiny of England and her great responsibility was not entirely based upon the mystical relationship which the nation had with God, but also a more practical point of view. While in India, Kipling had seen the contrast between the squalor and ignorance and superstition and inefficiency of the natives compared to the efficiency and enlightenment of the English rulers. Despite his acid criticisms against misrule and government muddling, he saw in the white man the potential power to raise the natives' way of life. He was impressed by the contributions of the white man to the native countries, and he issues the challenge to them to

> Clear the land of evil, drive the road and
> bridge the ford. (31)

This challenge found a ready response in the hearts of many Englishmen but the improvements of civilisation did not always bring justice and light but often misery and confusion. It is noticeable that most English writers were not opposed to imperialism as such, but what they despised was the blatant, arrogant stupidity which the masses showed in

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(29) Ibid. p.26.

(30) Ibid. p.119.

(31) Ibid. p.118.

their bombastic bragging, and the corrupt hypocrisy which attended many of the dealings of both political leaders and business men. Most of the opponents of imperialism admitted that a wise course could bring good to other peoples, and that imperialism could be made to work for an international brotherhood if honestly and sincerely handled in that light. In Kipling, those who looked for a higher imperial ethic, found only a banjo-strummer who was ever ready to cater to the prejudices of the mob. That Kipling was aware of the national sins was evident in the lines:

> Yea, though we sinned, and our rulers went out from righteousness -
> Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garment's hem... (32)

but he believed that the Lord would deal with "evil councillors", and Kipling does not look alone at the sordid aspects of imperialism. Kipling was a showman - he liked the crowd and could not resist their enthusiasm for life and action, and he inevitably let himself go in their direction, but from time to time pulls himself up and re-examines his own attitudes. It is in these moments that we have the wider view which could be almost interpreted as hypocrisy in the light of his violent jingoism.

Kipling was conscious of Englishmen as born rulers, and there was some justification for this attitude when he contrasted the native Indians and their English rulers. That he condoned only the worst in imperialism does not seem to be entirely just. He called forth sacrifice for more than selfish imperialism. It was not entirely hypocrisy when he sings:

> Send forth the best ye breed,
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captive's need. (33)

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(32) Ibid., A Song of the English, p.117

(33) Ibid., The White Man's Burden, p.320

Kipling was arrogantly conscious of the price England had to pay for her power, and he speaks of the demands of the sea - the English sea - on England:

> We have fed our sea for a thousand years
> And she calls us still unfed,
> Though there's never a wave of all the waves
> But marks our English dead. (34)

and fervently exclaims:

> If blood be the price of admiralty
> Lord God we ha' paid in full. (35)

The sense of sacrifice is strong in Kipling as it was in Henley, and he fully realizes the heavy price paid for English power, but he does not object, but rather interprets it as a sign of England's destiny that her sons should hold sacrifice and duty above all else for the sake of their country and Empire. The extent of this sacrifice is brought out in the inevitability of the lines:

> We must feed our sea for a thousand years
> For that is our pride and doom. (36)

There is unquestioned superiority in Kipling's white man which invariably leads to the ideal of race superiority, and which Kipling reflects, not only because he believed it, but because the nation believed it. Cramb tells his countrymen that

> The race dowered with genius for Empire is compelled to dare all, to suffer all, to sacrifice all for the fulfilment of its fate-appointed task. (37)

The ardent imperialist believed that the strength and resourcefulness of the English were equal to whatever obligations they assumed, and the sense of sacrifice and duty was expected because it was the Destiny of England to be an imperial nation whether she wanted to or not.

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(34) Ibid., The Song of the Dead, p.122.

(35) Ibid. p.122.

(36) Ibid. p.122.

(37) J.A.Cramb, The Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain, p.13.

Kipling's conception of human individuality and character is governed by his impassioned love of action and Empire. In the poem M'Andrew's Hymn, there is a line which sums up Kipling's man:

Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, obedience, discipline! (38)

these are the ideals which make up the noblest character. There is something primitive in these requirements in that they subject the individual to an ordered regimentation which precludes thinking. Kipling's experience in a country like India which had brought him face to face with law, no doubt stimulated these ideals. He had seen law in the jungle where the fittest survive both among men and animals. In the business of government he had seen the need for efficiency - an efficiency based upon law, Thus he commands his man:

Keep ye the law - be swift in all obedience. (39)

In the discipline of military life he sees these virtues being practised. Discipline meant obedience, it meant law, and for Kipling these things were necessary. The application of this ideal to the national life suggests the Darwinian Theory of the survival of the fittest among the nations, and to this ideal Kipling subscribed. His was the doctrine of power and might - a power and might which could be used to bring new life to the heathen and maintain the vitality of English civilization. English power and ingenuity was to be pitted against nature and barbarism in the distant corners of the globe. England was the self-disciplined nation - strong and masterful, restless for adventure and new horizons to conquer. The individual must submerge himself to the tribe, and in being good soldiers and good workmen they can ennoble themselves and others.

There is ever present in his poetry the sense of the heroic spirit which makes the blood of men tingle, and their hearts leap for adventure.

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(38) Rudyard Kipling, op.cit., p.51.

(39) Ibid. A Song of the English, p.118.

Kipling aroused in the young Victorians a fuller consciousness of Empire and also a new sense of the qualities which Empire required of them, and stimulated an admiration for these qualities to such an extent that men began to fulfil their own destiny by merging it with the destiny of their race.

Character to Kipling was more important than knowledge, and it was in formulating the temper of the people by searching and knowing them as human beings on their own level that Kipling far outstripped all other imperial poets in arousing the national spirit. Others had proclaimed imperial ideas on a grandiose scale, but had failed to make them live for the masses. Kipling was immeasureably helped in his task of arousing imperial feeling by the men in high places. There were Rhodes and Chamberlain and Jameson and Roberts who symbolized for the masses the highest expression of all the qualities Kipling sang - Chamberlain, the man with the 'Big England' attitude over against the meanness and timidity of the Little Englander - Rhodes, the romantic adventurer who had made a fortune in a far country, and like Joshua of the Old Testament, had brought back tidings of a new Promised Land awaiting the coming of the new Chosen People - Jameson, the daring adventurer staking all for Empire - Roberts and Baden-Powell, the colourful defenders of Empire, the military strong men, symbols of the courage, discipline and soldierly heritage of the Empire. These were the heroes of the people - these were the men of Destiny in a race whose destiny it was to be master of the world - and Kipling, the tribal bard, singing the praises of leaders and people alike.

That Kipling was the bard of Empire rather than the bard of England is quite clear in many of his poems. He is conscious of the peoples of Canada, South Africa, Australia as no other poet was. He had travelled the world and seen the extent of Empire and its vast implications, and

he had also seen that the so-called colonies were in their own right young nations. It was difficult for Englishmen to understand this point, and Kipling made it clear in his poem Our Lady of the Snows where he speaks of the strong bond which binds Canada to the Mother country, but emphasizes that she possesses independence:

"Daughter am I in My Mother's house
But Mistress in My own." (40)

It was Kipling's ideal to bring home to his countrymen the vastness of Empire, but at the same time to give them assurance that these were Englishmen no matter where they went. In his poem Native-Born he says of Englishmen:

They change their skies above them,
But not their hearts that roam!
We learned from our wistful mothers
To call Old England 'home'. (41)

In the Song of the Sons - the very title has immense emotional appeal - he speaks of the Empire's sons as being "one from the ends of the earth", and commands the Mother Country to be proud of her deed in giving to the world such men. He is constantly seeking appreciation of the parts of the Empire scattered far from the home shores. Desperately he seeks to bridge the broad seas with his verse; but it was a futile task because, although sentiment remained strong, the colonial character began to shape itself into an individual character which had little in common with English character. Kipling realized that in unity there was strength and he seeks to keep alike the mystical bond of union. England's Answer expresses this desire when he says to all Englishmen everywhere:

Truly ye come of the Blood;
slower to bless than to ban;
Little used to lie down at
the bidding of any man. (42)

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(40) Ibid. p.132.

(41) Ibid. p.143.

(42) Ibid. p.128.

Kipling seeks a sense of equality among the peoples of the Empire, born out of a common brotherhood, and he brings this idea out effectively in the lines:

> Ay, talk to your grey Mother that bore you on her knees! -
> That ye may talk together, brother to brother's face -
> Thus for the good of your people - thus for the Pride of your Race. (43)

and he throws down a challenge to the sons of the Empire to

> Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
> Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
> Stand to your work and be wise - certain of sword and pen,
> Who are neither childrn nor gods, but men in a world of men! (44)

Kipling desires to make praise a lesser consideration to the end of building a great Empire and to build effectively each man must work and place his faith in "sword and pen" - the English might and mind - to bring about the New Jerusalem.

It has been claimed that Kipling's doctrine was completely misinterpreted by his generation. Holbrook Jackson says in this respect that

> It was easier to mistake the gospel of Kipling, and the crowd did mistake it because his most popular songs were set to a banjo melody. (45)

There does not seem sufficient justification for the statement that they mistook his gospel,because its message was clear enough - growth of Empire - but they undoubtedly did overlook what they did not want to see, and the worst elements of his work were accentuated because their ideas were close to the people's hearts.

Kipling's ardent expressions about Empire inevitably lead to a consideration of his ideas about England. Chesterton avers that Kipling

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(43) Ibid. England's Answer, p.128.

(44) Ibid. p.129.

(45) Holbrook Jackson, The Eighteen Nineties, p.290.

"admires England but does not love her". (46) There seems to be a good deal of support for Chesterton's opinion. Whether Kipling had a great deal of enthusiasm for England as such is debatable. It is as the powerful hub of Empire that he loves her. He can look at England itself and ask:

> ...what should they know of England
> who only England know? - (47)

He seems to find little satisfaction in England as such, and this is again expressed in the lines:

> If England was what England seems,
> An' not the England of our dreams,
> But only putty, brass and paint,
> 'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't! (48)

His praise is rather stinted on the whole and his criticisms more vigorous than his commendations. In the Broken Men he gives way to a rather trifling compliment in the words:

> Ah God! one sniff of England -
> To greet our flesh and blood -
> To hear the traffic slurring
> Once more through English mud! (49)

whereas in the poem Pharaoh and the Sergeant he tells of a soldier sent out to train the Egyptian army which is forgotten by the government:

> An' England didn't seem to know nor care.
> That is England's awful way o' doing business -
> She would serve her God or Gordon just the same -
> For she thinks her Empire still is the Strand and
> Holborn Hill. (50)

Times without number Kipling directs barbs against English muddling and inefficiency which he probably saw as weakening to the Empire and to its prestige with lesser peoples. In the Boer War his Stellenbosh is a vituperative criticism against inefficient English generals, and in another poem

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(46) G.K.Chesterton, Heretics, p.47

(47) Rudyard Kipling, op.cit., The English Flag, p.177

(48) Ibid., The Return, p.471

(49) Ibid., p.152

(50) Ibid., p.154

he pens the praise of Joubert the Boer General. It might have been Kipling's disillusionment with English power and might that stimulated the critical lines in The Islanders written after the fiasco of the Boer War which pricked the bubble of English invincibility:

> And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and you
> flaunted your iron pride,
> Ere ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the
> men who could shoot and ride
> Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented
> your souls
> With the flanneled fools at the wicket or the
> muddied oafs at the goals. (51)

Chesterton's suggestion that Kipling's devotion to England was a reasoned one might be carried still further to say that this devotion was born out of his love of the strong, and the power and glory of Empire. The English Flag is a poem dedicated to a flag that is everywhere:

> 'What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my breath
> to dare,
> Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth for it
> is there!' (52)

and again in another poem he says:

> Take 'old o' the Wings o' the Mornin'
> An' flop round the earth till you're dead,
> But you won't get away from the tune that they play
> To the bloomin' old rag over'ead. (53)

He might better have said the Empire's Flag. England, to Kipling seemed to be only a part of a greater force, and as long as she could contribute to that cause he was willing to sing her praises, and to use all his gifts to advance her interests - even to the extent of his own self-respect with the more thinking minds of the nation. As soon as she begins to show signs of weakness or her emphasis was too much on narrow glory for England than for the cause of Empire, he turns from her.

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(51) Ibid. p.307

(52) Ibid. p.181

(53) Ibid., The Widow at Windsor, p.362

Kipling's famous Recessional came as a surprise to the English people themselves on the glorious day of the sixtieth Jubilee when they arose hoping for a flood of praise, to find only a poem of solemn warning. His tone in this poem was not in keeping with the lavish spectacle which Empire had provided for the Queen - it was not in keeping with the tone of great numbers of poems of praise which scribblers both major and minor wrote - nor was it in keeping with the sense of might and certainty with which the magazine "Punch" celebrated the great Spithead naval review when one of their writers penned these lines:

> .....
> Punch counted them and cried Hooray!
> This sign well crowns a glorious day!
> Britannia silent sat and gazed
> On these grim warders of her isle,
> Flags flaunted, beacons mightily blazed!
> Responsive then, to Punch's smile
> "Alls well' she cried 'old friend whilst we
> Are 'compass'd by the inviolate sea'." (54)

To Kipling the cause seemed to be lost in the self-satisfied pomp and pride. He knew the blatant ignorant Cockney, and he probably realized that he had stirred too far these qualities in his attempt to further the cause of Empire, and the time had come - the propitious moment to cut away the weeds which had overgrown the fruit, and so he writes:

> Far called our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire;
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
> Judge of the Nations spare us yet
> Lest we forget - lest we forget. (55)

The English were still the Chosen of God - Kipling had no desire to destroy what he implicitly believed, but they were losing sight of their destiny in the ferocity of their egotism. It appears that the Jubilee

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(54) Punch, Vol.CXII, p.305.

(55) Rudyard Kipling, Op.cit., p.324.

did not mark the triumph of Empire, but only the outward trappings of an unrestrained nation "drunk with sight of power". (56)

With this poem Kipling was the object of a good deal of scorn because the anti-imperialists read into it an arrogant hypocrisy, and Watson's parody attacks Kipling's sincerity:

> Best by remembering God, say some,
> We keep our high imperial lot,
> Fortune I think has mainly come,
> When we forgot - when we forgot. (57)

It was difficult for many to believe that the Lord God of Hosts could be pleased with the commercial conquests which many people believed imperialism to be. Nevertheless, the tone of the poem strikes at the "wild tongues" which Kipling himself had stimulated, and seems to suggest that personal responsibility hung heavy on the poet's shoulders.

Kipling witnessed the same arrogance and jingoism during the Boer War, but he did not play such an important part in its fury. His poem The Absentminded Beggar was not particularly stimulating despite the fact that it was prominently shown in many of the magazines and periodicals. It is possible that the defeats suffered by the English armies shattered his illusions about power and might, and the theory of the Chosen Race. At this time he reacted against war and failed to glorify to any great extent the heroisms of the Boer War.

The poetry which followed the Boer War often lays emphasis upon the working out by the nations of their common problems. The Settler expresses the theme of a sense of co-operation among peoples:

> I will lay my hand on my neighbour's hand
> And together we will atone
> For the set folly and the red breach
> And the black waste of it all,
> Giving and taking council each
> Over the cattle-kraal. (58)

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(56) Ibid. p.324.

(57) André Maurois, Prophets and Poets, p.13

(58) Rudyard Kipling, op.cit., p.168

In the poem The Lesson he asks the nation to consider the lesson with reason "as business people should", and admit that:

> We have had an imperial lesson; it may
> make us an Empire yet! (59)

To Kipling the country had lost its way, and he had been partially responsible, and in his own poem Gentlemen-Rankers, he ironically expresses lines which reflect in mockery the confusion of imperial England at the close of the Boer War:

> We're poor little lambs who've lost our way,
> Baa! Baa! Baa!
> We're little black sheep who've gone astray,
> Baa-aa-aa. (60)

Kipling has been called the 'Bard of Empire', which may be partially true, but what would be more accurate is that he is the 'Bard of Might-is-Right'. He wrote at a time when the ideals of Empire were far different from the commonwealth conception which is held today. Even at that, he is not entirely blind to the broader conception of Empire, and it would seem that through the blatancy and arrogance of much of his worst imperial verse he saw more clearly than most of his compatriots did, the trend of Empire towards a commonwealth of equal nations. He is not only the poet of commercial imperialism which tended to debase many of the imperial ideals, because it is safe to say that he saw that a large and civilized Empire could bring much to the countries which had not progressed in many ways as far as England herself had done. All this was lost, however, and his message misfired, and Kipling is mostly represented as a tribal poet appealing hypocritically to God on one hand, and wooing an ignorant mass of Cockneys with his jingoistic banjo on the other.

Whatever the final evaluation of his imperial poetry, Kipling stands as a poetic monument to ideals of which the trappings change but the underlying emphasis remains the same. His love of power, his rampant

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(59) Ibid. p.320.

(60) Ibid. p.378.

militarism and his stress on might could well have found a responsive chord in the Germany of the last decade or in the Russia of this decade. These are not the highest ideals men can aspire towards, but they represent the imperial scene in a day when England experimented with the theory that "might-is-right", and found it wanting because the English character with its conception of democratic ideals could not remain long under its influence, and could only do so when blinded by emotionalism so that its reason was dulled. Boer War or no Boer War, the old style imperialism was doomed to failure in England because the growing conceptions of democracy applied to the country itself would eventually have found their way into Empire. Kipling sees also this side of the question, but unfortunately it was lost in the enthusiasm of the age, and he did not fully enunciate it. Kipling failed to rise above the masses in his expression of his deepest feelings, but instead catered to them, and it might well be said in conclusion that Kipling the imperialist is, in the words of a title of one of his books, "The Light that Failed" - failed to lift the people towards a higher imperial ideal.

Conclusion

With the passing of the Boer War, imperialism of the old type began its decline. The pertinent questions of the day no longer centred on expansion of the Empire, but rather on its defence. There was a growing concern over the ever-increasing German armaments, decreasing trade and growing poverty among the masses. The Socialists, Labour and others who sought internal reform gained larger audiences, and the appeal of the outward pomp and circumstance did not have so much power over the minds of the people. If nothing else, the imperial fervour had left England more aware of her Empire than ever before, and this in turn helped pave the way for the growth of the idea of a commonwealth of nations democratically equal.

With the decline of the aggressive imperialism, the heydey of the imperial poet vanished, and he left behind a heritage which could show little in the way of good poetry, let alone great poetry. Nevertheless, what has remained is a remarkable expression of an astonishing period in English history. Probably at no other point in England's history has the poet been closely enough connected with the political issues and the feelings of the people to leave such a record as this. Poetry gives life to incidents which otherwise might be forgotten or at least lose their force. The insignificant charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava has been preserved forever, not by the historians, but by the poet. Thus it is with imperialism, the historical material is there, but it is the poetry which gives life to it, and makes it possible for our age to appreciate the emotional fervour of Imperial England.

We have seen that many of the well known poets of the age showed no interest in imperialism, and the fact that they ignored it serves to lay stress on the work of the poets who paid homage to it. The amount and force of some of this verse might tend to suggest that the Victorian poets

were overwhelmingly in favour of imperialism. No such conclusion, however, can be justly drawn, and the true perspective as far as imperial poetry is concerned, must be obtained from the influence of the writing.

Tennyson gained some popularity through imperial verse in his later years, and Kipling was overwhelmingly a public idol. As the age progressed and imperial fervour grew, imperial poetry grew apace until the last ten years of the century was one long paean of praise of English imperial aims. Thus many poets of inferior stature began to gain public approval and popularity which overshadowed the more earnest poetry of finer quality. When one considers that Austin could be chosen as Laureate, this fact becomes more evident.

To attempt to assess the contribution which imperial poetry has made to literature would turn the spotlight on the second rate quality of most of the work. Aside from a number of fine utterances by men like Swinburne, Tennyson, Kipling and Henley, the majority of the verse is of little literary worth, although in the case of men like Buchanan and Watson it often expressed noble sentiments in passable poetry. It might be safe to say that imperialism produced no lasting poetry. Its expression on the whole is insufficient to carry it from a literary point of view, and its sentiments are entirely dependent on a specialized national outlook. Few of these poems could by read with any sympathy today.

Furthermore, the uncritical glorification of the militant aspects of life has lost force for many people and the worship of war and conquest has suffered bitterly under the cynicism and skepticism of the present postwar disillusionment. Added to this is the increased rationalism of thinking and a greater sensitivity of feeling. All these factors have lessened the value of imperial poetry, and most of it remains of interest only as literary and historical curios.

Imperial verse can stand, however, as a revelation of the transience of our political passions when the vision becomes narrowed. Undoubtedly English imperialism and the literature which it left behind had within them the suggestion of wider aspirations of a world community of nations, and there is hardly an imperial poet whose work does not express this ideal. Some were hypocritical in their expression, others were sincere, but the wider hopes were squelched in the overgrowth of national egotism, and most of the imperialist poets found it easier to express what the crowd desired rather than seek to stimulate intelligent and loftier aims.

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