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Landscape Without Labour: A Study of the
View of Nature and the Agricultural Labourer
in the "Quality" Journals 1859 - 1900.

By

A.M. Richardson

Submitted for the Degree of PH.D.

at The University of Kent, Canterbury.

October 1980

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the way in which the 'quality' journals of the period 1859-1900 presented nature to their readers, and how the agricultural labourer at a time of unionisation was seen by them. The question addressed to this material is : did the agricultural unrest, which focused on the labourers, cause the existing languages and forms used to carry a rural leisure interest in the journals, to change creating new forms and languages which encompassed and were sympathetic to the labourer? The work is divided into three sections. Section I introduces the material and gives a history of the 'quality' journals, paying particular attention to their role as opinion formers and to their readership. Section II sets out the three major leisure pursuits in nature, promoted by the 'quality' journals. These are called "aesthetic", "scientific" and "hedonist" and discuss the writings and the assumptions behind the writing on landscape art, natural science and hunting. The labourer is virtually excluded by the writers in this section. Section III focuses attention on the labourer and shows the response of the 'quality' press to their unionisation. Chapter Six shows a change in language which encompassed the labourer achieved by Frederick Clifford a reporter for The Times. Chapter Seven discusses the work of several rural clergymen who wrote to the press on behalf of the labourer. As so many of the writers discussed appeared to present fictional labourers, a look at 'genuine' fictional labourers is taken in Chapter Eight. The third section culminates in the work of Richard Jefferies and a second change of language is shown.. The conclusion discusses the limited way in which language changed in the 'quality' journals and considers that we have still not reconciled the antitheses of rural myth and rural reality in the 20th century.

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PREFACE

This study began as research into the writings of Richard Jefferies, the 19th century ruralist. I was seeking to discover an explanation for his contradictory writings on the labourer and to examine the linguistic result of the tensions of this individual writer, who wished to succeed as a novelist but was considered to be more successful as a journalist.

The work expanded into its present form once Jefferies was looked at in the "quality" journals. As will be seen, Jefferies was necessarily reduced by the scale of this work and in Section One became not an individual writer, but a journalist amongst journalists, sharing a market for rural writings. However, this attempt to submerge him amongst his contemporaries serves only to mark out his strengths more clearly.

This study places Jefferies in context and, in the culmination of the work, justifies his uniqueness.

SECTION I

SETTING THE SCENE

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1:1

This study enquires into the way in which the 'quality' journals of the period 1859-1900 presented nature to their readers, and how the agricultural labourer, at a time of unionisation, was seen by them. The principle question asked is: did the agricultural unrest, focusing particularly on the labourers unionisation, as seen in the "quality" journals, cause the existing languages and forms used for leisure interests in nature to change, creating new forms and languages which encompassed and were sympathetic to the labourer?

It became clear in the early study of Jefferies, that rural writings were not only given a definite and favoured place in the 'quality' journals by editors, but were in themselves a large enough part of the journals' usual content to have distinct areas within them. I have separated these out into three individual leisure interests which took place in nature, in addition to the interest in all aspects of agriculture which included rural unionisation. Despite the breadth of the rural based articles which covered such a wide range, the languages and the forms employed to promote them were limited and narrow. The language employed in presenting an article on landscape art for instance, could be found out of

its context (so it seemed) in a discussion of cottages and village improvements. It is necessary therefore to examine rural writings in detail in all these 'categories' and to properly chart the movement in language in order to understand the cultural assumptions which lie behind them.

Surprisingly, the great names of the 19th century: Wordsworth, Ruskin, Darwin, were not present within the "quality" journals to any appreciable degree. I fully expected to find them, but this was not the case. It is for this reason that these key 19th century figures do not have a place in this work. Where they appear, in fleeting references, they are observed, but their absence is not a studied absence. Other key figures such as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy were present in the 'quality' journals and their place and the response to them is charted. The time scale, from 1859-1900, covers the publications of Ruskin and Darwin, but the 'quality' journals avoided any close scrutiny of their work. They were both circumscribed and evaded which prevented them from threatening established views.

The time scale was principally dictated by the life span of these journals. I wished to study them when they were at their most competitive in order to properly gauge the accepted views they produced in their bid to secure readers. 1859-60 saw the inauguration of the new shilling monthly, and 1900 was the date of their death. 1859 as a starting point also allowed the inclusion of any impact from On the Origin of Species and Adam Bede. The period also spanned the inauguration

of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in 1872, its major set-back in the massive strike and lockout in East Anglia in 1874, and the gaining of the county franchise in 1884. It covered rural decline, agricultural improvements and a large amount of legislation on game and poaching.

My approach to this material is contextual rather than interdisciplinary, since I did not set out to blend or merge the disciplines of literary criticism, social history, cultural history, and 'soft' sociology. These terms do not seem applicable to a study which sought initially to place a writer within the context of his time in order to accurately measure his standing. The result of this work is, of course, not just Jefferies' placement, but a thorough examination of the confused way in which the educated class of Victorian society looked at nature and the labourer. These contextual findings are offered as contributions to the various disciplines listed above.

The contextual work begins with Chapter Two. There the "quality" journals are described, their importance and their readership assessed. I use the term "magic circle"⁽¹⁾ to describe the small clique of like-minded men who ran the journals. It will be seen that they wrote for each other rather than for an accurately assumed readership, and this factor largely accounts for their decline. The "quality" journals are an under-researched area in Victorian periodicals. This Chapter brings together the salient known facts, together with material taken from memoirs and letters and presents a composite picture of this close-knit world.

Section II introduces the journals' coverage of leisure interests in nature to be enjoyed by themselves and their readers. There were three distinct leisure activities to enjoy in nature and I have given them the names "aesthetic", "scientific" and "hedonist". These terms are explained in the introduction to Section II and are demonstrated within Chapters Three to Five. These three areas also contain further sub-divisions. In Chapter Three, for instance, the interests range from esoteric Medievalism to the sketcher in the fields. An analysis of the appreciation of some of the most popular landscape paintings of the period is also included. Chapter Three is lengthy and given the wealth of writing on the subject could be much longer, but as thorough a representative sample as possible has been given in order to show the incredible strength of the "aesthetic" view. It will be seen that the way in which the figure in the landscape was avoided, or only observed within strict definitions of harmony and taste, exposes a dominant ideology within "quality" society based on the ownership of land. For the most part the writers on landscape art were figure-blind, but when in Section III attention is focussed on the journals' coverage of the labourer the full force of the "aesthetic" view will be observed within a political setting. Chapter Four of Section II sets out the "scientific" interest in nature. The "quality" journals put popular science articles at the top of their hierarchy of scientific interests and the nature Rambler article at the bottom. A healthy

amateur dislike of specialised study is encouraged by the presentation of natural science which insists that the reader can rapidly acquire the fashionable taste in nature as flora and fauna. For all their populism and fashion, the articles promoting the scientific interest in nature contain a serious viewpoint. First, to view nature scientifically breaks down the way of seeing object related to object and focuses attention in isolation. Second, the distance and objectivity gained from even a pseudo-scientific interest, such as is displayed in Chapter Four, offers an opportunity to make all things objects including the labourers. The "scientific" view of nature demanded a narrow visual range, since cataloguing required a detailed and fine observation. These details, and the minuteness of their recording, when focused on the labourer in Section III, could not avoid creating compassion for the labourer. By the same process, the sheer weight of the detail prevented any proper analysis, but this was out of keeping with a view which aimed to catalogue rather than to understand.

Chapter Five describes the pleasures of hunting and the pains associated with the impact of agricultural change upon field sports. The poacher discussed within this Chapter, does bring a labourer, of sorts, forward. However, as will be seen, there was an extensive debate conducted around the poacher within this view which drew upon a range of 'information': fact, fiction, myth and protest which culminates in declaring the labourer to be too stupid to be the poacher. Unlike the ideology underlying the "aesthetic" and "scientific" views of nature, the "hedonist" view does not pass on to Section III directly, but instead brings forward, through its debate on the poacher, the question of fact and fiction.

Section III then introduces the 'plight' of the labourer and reviews the writings directly about the worker in nature in the light of the leisure activities which also took place there. The section is introduced with a brief outline of the extent of the writings on the changes in agriculture during the time, paying particular attention to a charitable interest in the labourers. Chapter Six gives a full description of the great 1874 strike and lockout as seen through the reports from The Times correspondent Frederick Clifford. He is the first of all the journalists discussed in this work to produce a form which could encompass the labourer, and he used it, and his skill as a reporter, to bring about an end to the dispute as it affected the smallest of the Unions involved, the Lincolnshire Labour League. Clifford is placed in his context in The Times through an examination of the letters created by his reports. Attention is given to the letter from Lady Stradbroke which sets out the full political implications of the "aesthetic" view of nature. I have also included a brief analysis of the contributions to the dispute by The Times' competitor Graphic, and Punch. Chapter Seven continues to examine writers who claimed to be on the spot and therefore eye-witnesses of rural agitation. Four rural clergymen who wrote to the "quality" press are examined in this chapter and their reports cover the period before Unionisation of the labourers, the middle conflictual period and the 1880s time of rural stagnation. All the viewpoints of the leisure interests reappear in the writings of these rural clergymen and their focus on the labourers conveys a strong sense of idealisation, or, as it appears from their presentations, fiction.

It is at this point that the study departs from such a close focus on the labourer. The form of the languages already seen both promoting hobbies and commenting upon current events is taken up. The fictional aspect of the labourers seen as poacher and as unionists (both for and against) is placed in the context of 'genuine' fictional labourers in Chapter eight. The way in which the "quality" journals reviewed and measured Adam Bede and Far From the Madding Crowd reinforces the cultural assumptions concerning the labourers already exposed. Their enjoyment of the unthreatening rural world in Adam Bede and their dislike of Hardy's 'too-clever-by-half' presentation of the labourers in Madding Crowd pinpoints their attitudes toward nature and the labourer, and brings forward the question of the inside-outside view, or posed and unposed labourers.

The study then culminates in Jefferies, and Chapter Nine measures the full extent of his contributions on the labourers. He successfully accommodates the labourer in his writing and is the second of the journalists to be found who could take the limited and accepted views and methods of presenting those views and change them in order to present the labourer. Clifford and Jefferies are the only journalists who were both motivated to look at the labourer with interest, and used language imaginatively in order to adequately present the labourer within nature. Clifford's writings brought about a resolution between farmers and unionists. Jefferies' writing resolved a conflict between fact and fiction, between posed and unposed, between inside view and outside judgement.

The concluding chapter brings together the threads of the argument: Realism, journalism, viewpoint and assesses the completed work. Particular attention is paid to the extent of 'city' views and experience brought to bear on rural problems. The initial question, which asked whether agricultural unrest did cause a change in existing languages has been answered in two individual instances. The effect of the dominant cultural assumptions concerning landscape, seen as nature, and by extension to the figure in the landscape, working in nature, are then viewed again in the light of this small linguistic achievement by the talented writers who made up the "magic circle" of the "quality" Victorian journals.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter One

- (1) Peacock, T.L. "An Essay on Fashionable Literature"
cited in Mills, H. (ed) Memoirs: Essays and Reviews
Thomas Love Peacock London 1970 p. 97

CHAPTER TWO

The History of the Journals

2:1

This chapter presents a brief history of the 19th century "quality" journals whose contents reflect the cultural assumptions which were largely taken for granted by the Victorian middle and upper middle classes.

It is widely accepted among students of the 19th century that the medium of publication affected structure. For example, the way in which the novel of this period was produced and distributed affected its plot. A reference to 'part issues', 'three deckers' and monthly serialisations in the journals is commonly utilised in analyses of 19th century novels. The great length of these novels, allowing room for detailed descriptions and many characters, is also part-explained by the nature of their publication.

Market forces similarly affected the journalists of this period. It is important that the writing discussed in the following sections and chapters is properly understood in the context of the economic pressures on journalists and their writing, and also on journals and their contents. Before articles could be published they were affected by a chain of economic pressures which began with the presumed reader, passed on to the proprietor, the editor and so to the contributor. These pressures shaped the language and content of the articles.

Above all, the "quality" journals reflect the assumptions of the well educated Victorian. They provide access to fashionable tastes and opinions held by Victorians with money and leisure. They are a better medium of opinion to study than novels, with such an aim in mind, since the numbers of journal writers, whose writing was controlled by editors and proprietors, provide a composite picture of Victorian culture unobtainable from novelists. The "quality" journals reflect light on views of nature and of the labourer, held by those with influence in this period. The very competitiveness of the market in which the 19th century journal flourished and died confirms that competition necessarily sharpened the responses of editors and proprietors to the leisure interests presumed to prevail among their readers.

The 'Quality' Press ⁽¹⁾

The term "quality" applies to the section of journalism aimed at readers with money, education and leisure. Principally the journals studied are new monthly periodicals, first produced in 1859-60 but older quarterly and monthly journals published within the period 1859-1900 are also included, as are newspapers covering roughly the same readership. Excursions into more specialised journals are taken (c.f. Chaps. three and four) but as the intention of the work is to uncover cultural assumptions about nature and the agricultural labourer which prevailed among the influential sector of Victorian society, attention is given to the general rather than the specialised journal.

My own guide to the "quality" journals' hierarchy puts Chambers' Edinburgh Journal⁽²⁾ (Chambers) at the very bottom, for reasons set out below. The middle range, written for "the comfortable, literate, but ill-educated middle-class which read magazines for pure entertainment and easy instruction"⁽³⁾ are such journals as: Temple Bar: A London Magazine for Town and Country Readers (Temple Bar), Victoria Magazine (Victoria), Argosy, Belgravia, Tinsley's Magazine (Tinsleys), London Society, St. James's Gazette (St James) etc. The most "quality" of all, those which served "the formation of opinion, the training of manners, the dissemination of ideas"⁽⁴⁾ are Cornhill Magazine (Cornhill), St. Paul's: A Monthly Magazine (St Pauls), Fortnightly Review (Fortnightly), Fraser's Magazine For Town and Country (Frasers), Macmillans Magazine (Macmillans), 19th Century, National Review (National) etc.

The inclusion of Chambers helps the definition of "quality". It was considered to be a journal for "workingmen"⁽⁵⁾ and was a respectable periodical which influenced Parliament when they were deliberating the consequences of giving the working class cheap paper and cheap periodicals, by removing advertising and paper taxes.⁽⁶⁾ Richard D. Altick noted the claim that 1,600 copies of Chambers were sold each week in Manchester, but he felt that readers were petit-bourgeois rather than "workingmen". He referred to an "old educationalist" who had not been able to persuade his working class pupils to read it, they preferred their local paper.⁽⁷⁾ It was, according to Altick, "more responsible, perhaps more than any other single factor, for whatever smattering of culture the class of shopkeepers and skilled artisans possessed during the

early Victorian age".⁽⁸⁾ Chambers was edited in the early 1860s by James Payn, who raised its circulation by twenty thousand simply by serialising his novel Lost Sir Massingbred in it in 1864. Although Chambers steadily declined throughout the second half of the 19th century, it was recognised as a popular version of a "quality" journal by contemporary editors and journalists.

From the other end of the scale, the proprietor of Cornhill, at a time of financial crisis, looked to Payn to save Cornhill with his Chambers' experience. Payn's first step as editor of Cornhill was to lower the price to 6d a month and to increase the number of fictional pieces in the journal. According to the editor who replaced him, the journal became entirely fiction. It carried two serialised novels, "a few short stories and light essays, but these were only a kind of stuffing for the fiction".⁽⁹⁾ Payn did not make Cornhill sell more widely by letting it drop below "quality" journal level. It had always been characterised by its tone of "polite entertainment coupled with information of the least disconcerting kind".⁽¹⁰⁾ At the 6d level this genteel journal had to compete with more sensational fiction, and Payn's attempt to rescue it from financial disaster failed.

The respectability of the journals and their pace and presentation made them closer to "quality" newspapers than we today expect from periodicals. Despite the different deadlines: fortnightly, monthly and quarterly instead of daily, they did not put their extra time to any strikingly

of newspapers. Of course they had a more leisurely pace than The Times, Standard and Graphic, but the size of those newspapers offered compensatory space which gave them too an air of leisurely reading.

Journalism is a term applied in this work to the writings in newspapers and journals alike. There was however, a feeling amongst contemporaries that journalists who wrote for newspapers were not quite as independent, either in terms of income or political interest, as those who wrote for the "quality" journals. An important factor which helped to shape this view was the newspaper writer's obvious lack of amateur status, assisted by the daily nature of the work. George Smith wanted to merge the two kinds of writers for his afternoon paper Pall Mall Gazette (Pall Mall). It is claimed that he recruited "men of literary ability and unquestionable independence"⁽¹¹⁾ which in practise meant ⁽¹²⁾ he simply recruited journalists known to him through Cornhill. Like its fictional predecessor Pall Mall was a paper "written by gentlemen for gentlemen"⁽¹³⁾ This distinction clearly separates "quality" from popular in both newspapers and journals. It demonstrates the "magic circle's" view that they shared the same social world as their readers. Standard for instance was described by a contemporary as representing "the clergy and landed gentry" and as a rival to The Times it also aspired to (if it failed to achieve) a "greater power of literary expression than any daily morning paper".⁽¹⁴⁾

Journalists were literary men in a social as well as a literal sense. As all the "quality" journals had the backing of a publishing house which acted as a safety net and absorbed

losses, journalists and editors were more a part of publishing than today. For example, Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine (Blackwoods) and Macmillans were given the names of their publishers, while Smith and Elder were the first to name their journal after their address: Cornhill.⁽¹⁵⁾ Smith called Pall Mall after Thackeray's fictional paper in Pendennis as a compliment to him as the first editor of Cornhill. Frasers' 1870 arrangement with Longmans, Green and Co. was not indicated in its title as there was already a Longman's Magazine (Longmans) when the publishing house took over Frasers. The old name was kept in a bid to maintain the existing readership of the journal. Fortnightly was owned by Chapman and Hall who were also running Westminster Review (Westminster). A publishing house connected with a journal offered an easy means of republication of material for journalists. It cost the writer 50% of the profits to have articles republished in anthology form by the patron publishing house.

Distribution

The journals relied upon a cycle of production for their economic survival which linked Mudie's Select Library and Smith's Circulating Library to the publishing houses even closer together through the journals themselves. This cycle was first put into motion by the libraries distributing the journals to their subscribers. In return the journals carried pages of advertisements for the libraries as well as for the books, which Mudie's and Smith's offered on subscription.⁽¹⁶⁾

Each publishing house sold its own books and its journal(s) to Mudie's and Smith's. In addition, republished material in book form taken from the journals also found an outlet through this cycle. Serialised novels in volumes and anthologies of articles already printed followed the journal itself into the chain of distribution. Although launching a new journal could be a financial risk for a publishing house, it can be seen that they had a profit-making structure close to hand which made the venture attractive. The biggest risk they faced arose from the number of competitors.

This distributive cycle offered a great incentive to writers. When Robert Louis Stevenson was thinking of producing an anthology of unpublished essays for publication, he was strongly advised by Leslie Stephen against it. "He said he didn't imagine I was rich enough for such an amusement; and moreover whatever was worth publication was worth republication". (17)

Circulation

The "quality" journals market expanded dramatically when the taxes on paper were lifted. In 1855 newspaper tax was repealed as was the tax on paper itself in 1861. Earlier, in 1857 the cost of paper had been reduced by the use of esparto as an ingredient. The combined result was cheap paper and cheap publication. As a consequence there was also a massive increase in the numbers of new periodicals available to readers. In 1886 the Linotype machine was introduced which helped make publications even cheaper to produce. (18)

There was also an increased demand in reading material. In 1876 "English Literature" was introduced as a subject in elementary schools, thus making a new demand for suitable textbooks, and once new machinery aided the process, the sixpenny reprint novel catered for the new readers.

Similarly there was an increase in the number of readers of journals and newspapers. It has been argued that the Crimean War helped to create a newspaper reading habit. Statistics do endorse this suggestion, for between 1851 and 1861 the numbers of newspapers sold in those ten years doubled the numbers sold between 1821 and 1851.⁽¹⁹⁾ Daily Telegraph (Telegraph) took over the lead in newspaper circulation with 200,000 readers in the early 1870s, making it the largest circulated newspaper in the world.⁽²⁰⁾ In 1883 its readership had dropped to 185,000 but it was still in the lead followed by Standard at 180,000. The Times lay fifth with only 8,000. There were other reasons than the Crimean War for the increased demand for newspapers. The most obvious reason was the increase in population and another was increased urbanisation. In 1851 there were 563 national and regional newspapers which readers could choose from and seventeen of these were dailies, but by 1867 there were 1,294 newspapers of which 84 were dailies. Graphic sold 200,000 of its Christmas number for 1872 and by 1889 Pall Mall had 12,250 readers.⁽²¹⁾

The journals also increased in number and in circulation. Altick's study shows "quality" journals numbering 73 in 1864 but by 1873 they had increased to 383.⁽²²⁾ The effect of this upsurge in new journals is best shown in relation to individual journals. Cornhill for example had a circulation of 80,000 in 1860 which was maintained in 1865, but dropped to 18,000 in 1870. 1860 was the year of its birth and its first issue sold 120,000 copies. By 1865 it was still the largest selling journal of all the new monthlies with Macmillan, Temple Bar and London Society behind it in popularity selling only 20,000 each that year. However, by 1870 it had been overtaken by Cassell's Family Magazine (Cassells), London Society, St James, St Pauls, Argosy and Belgravia. Trollope commiserated with a poet who had been refused by Cornhill, and revealed his view of the journal:

The owner of the magazine wants to make money,
and would sooner have the worst verses a man
could put together with Tennyson's name to them,
than the most charming poetry from you, because
Tennyson's work would sell the periodical.

(23)

Altick claimed Cornhill's spectacular ability to "sell the periodical" brought in the competition which made that task more difficult. The drop in Cornhill's circulation ten years after its inauguration was, ironically, caused by its own initial success, creating the competitors who overtook it. Altick quoted Tinsley: "there were more magazines in the wretched field than there were blades of grass to support them".⁽²⁴⁾ Tinsley ran his own magazine Tinsleys and his publishing house took novels refused by all other publishers,

including two early novels by Hardy.⁽²⁵⁾ He was clearly in the 'risk business' which explains his discontented tone.

Fraser suffered a similar fate to Cornhill, although it was never as popular. In 1970 its usual 8,000 readers dropped to 6,000. It was third in popularity in 1860 but had been overtaken by six competitors in 1865 and had dropped to 18th place by 1870. Temple Bar lasted as long as the time span of this study. It was steadily popular and selling well until the 1890s, together with St James and Belgravia. In 1860 Temple Bar had 30,000 readers and although they had dropped in number to 11,000 in 1866, its 1870 level of 13,000 was maintained until 1896. This is remarkable in comparison with the circulation figures of the journals above it in "quality". By the time 1896 was reached readers had dropped to 8,000 and in 1906 its publishers discontinued it.⁽²⁶⁾

Rise and Fall

The above circulation figures, although their accuracy cannot be relied upon too heavily,⁽²⁷⁾ do show some sense of the rise and fall of the "quality" journals. There were complex reasons for their deaths, over and above the obvious jostling for position in a crowded market. Many journals did not actually die, in the sense of closing down, but they lost their importance as opinion formers, which is death enough as far as their significance is concerned.

Houghton claimed that the middle classes demanded education, or at least the veneer of culture, and this could be found in the short articles of the journals.⁽²⁸⁾ It was the demand for ease in obtaining knowledge which ultimately led to the death of the journals, for their readership was not designed to be the broad spectrum of the middle classes. Moreover, editors found there was a limit to their desire to popularise the contents of their journals.

The quarterlies were the first to go. They began to lose their prestige during the latter half of the 19th century, and any new quarterly after 1850 failed to survive. There were some exceptions: London Quarterly, for instance, which lasted until 1900 supported all its life by the Wesleyan Conference, and New Quarterly Magazine (New Quarterly) which began in 1873 and lasted seven years. It was making a reasonable income by the time of its death, when Charles Kegan Paul was its editor, but its early years had been too disastrous and it "died for want of capital".⁽²⁹⁾

The reasons for the unpopularity of quarterlies are relatively simple. They could not, for example, run a serialised novel, expecting the reader to wait breathlessly for three months instead of four weeks for the next instalment. Fiction was demanded by the readership in order to help the digestion of facts, and New Quarterly's survival was in part attributable

to the editorial practise of publishing short stories instead of serialised novels. The main reason lay in the considerable amount of reading required by the lengthy articles presented in quarterly form, compared to the few pages per topic in a monthly publication.

When Tennyson was asked to contribute to Cornhill, he refused both George Smith and Thackeray's invitations and later explained his reason: "reading magazines breaks one's mind all to bits."⁽³⁰⁾ Unlike Tennyson, the reading public in the 1870s and 1880s wanted their information broken down for them into smaller and smaller pieces for assimilation. The journals tried to keep up with this appetite but without much heart. It was George Newnes who really understood the demand and Tit Bits in 1880 gave the public what it wanted.⁽³¹⁾ Northcliffe regretted he had not thought of it first:

The Board Schools are turning out hundreds and thousands of boys and girls annually who are anxious to read. They do not care for the ordinary newspaper. They have no interest in society, but they will read anything which is simple and is sufficiently interesting. The man who has produced this Tit Bits has got hold of a bigger thing than he imagined. He is only at the beginning of a development which is going to change the whole face of journalism. I shall try to get in with him.

(32)

The "quality" journals did not want to cater for this wider audience with its cruder tastes, and so only the period 1860 to 1870 shows them at their most healthy. After 1880 they were on the verge of extinction unless they relied absolutely on backers. A publishing house was not enough

to absorb losses, there had to be a platform, society or political party behind them. Once a journal addressed itself to the support of members already in a pre-existing group, which implies a specialisation and a laying aside of debate, then it could weather economic storms a little longer. It had "moreover, a great advantage in its continuous power. Individuals die, remove, change their objects, or get exhausted; but a party continually furnishes new recruits".⁽³³⁾ One obviously difficult aspect of increased specialisation lay in its lack of accessibility for new readers. Allen observed that the Journal of Physiology (Physiology) and Annals of Botany (Botany) were becoming more 'professional' in the 1880s and consequently used a scientific language which made them unintelligible to the laity.⁽³⁴⁾ Ruskin, who had an amateur interest in botany and mineralogy, was one of the first to notice and criticise this trend, but it was endemic in the commercial situation.⁽³⁵⁾ Readers who took a serious interest in natural science had little alternative but to specialise that interest too, for the popular science article became more popular while the specialised increased their specialisations. A present-day comment illustrates:

Concomitant with this widening of perspective and deepening of interest went a rapidly growing demand for books and lectures making the results of science accessible and interesting to the lay public. An enormous body of literature popularising scientific knowledge sprang up to meet this demand. Veritably the second half of the 19th century became a spoon-meat era, an age of universal 'boiling down'. The solid food of science was reduced to pulp for the general reader to swallow. In some departments the popularisers were the very men whose names stood foremost as original authorities.

The full implications of "boiling down" are best seen in the deaths of individual journals.

Blackwoods issued its thousandth issue in February 1889 and is still in existence today. A glance at the list of editors gives one reason for its continuation, for out of the list only one was not a Blackwood. Its strong family connection was its mainstay. Cornhill's death throes have already been described. It was acquired in 1916 by John Murray and still exists in name as a quarterly. Edinburgh Review (Edinburgh) died in 1929 but its prime was the early part of the 19th century when Jeffrey was at its head. Macmillans, the first magazine to be launched by a publishing house as a book-selling 'puff' to whet the book buyers' appetite for Macmillan's books, failed in 1904 because it had "lost its distinctive character and as a whole its calibre had declined."⁽³⁷⁾ Quarterly Review (Quarterly) lost its importance when Lockhart left its editorship in 1853. Houghton's reasons for a lack of distinction in Quarterly are revealing both of the situation, and of his own theory that anxiety was the prime force in Victorian society:

In the last decade of the century, as causes and crises succeeded each other with ever-increasing speed and complexity, it became well-nigh impossible for either the Conservative Party or the Quarterly to take a consistent stand on any one body of political doctrine.

(38)

Although this implies that a journal can die when it ceases to be dogmatic, dogmatisim could also kill, as happened to Frasers in 1882. J.A. Froude, its chief editor, is blamed

by Houghton, because he was too illiberal in his opinions to compete with more bland competitors. Although three editors succeeded him after 1877, including at the last Longman the publisher himself, the damage had already been done.

There is a correlation between the numbers of editors and publishers who handled a journal and its rate of success. An unprofitable enterprise was handed on from person to person, firm to firm all round the "magic circle" rather like the 'old maid' in the card game popular at the time. Fraser's illustrates this constant change of hands, but Cornhill, although showing a rapid turnover of editors, was held together by Smith and Elder and the benign interest of George Smith himself. Fortnightly kept its name after being a fortnightly for its first year only, and also kept its standards much longer than the others, but not its readers. After 1890 even Fortnightly had to lower its standards in a bid for increased revenue. The two strong party journals National for the Conservatives and 19th Century for the Liberals were long lived. National survived until after the first world war, increasing its strident nationalistic tone with age. 19th Century fitted itself to change by adapting its title. It became 19th Century and After in 1901 but because the title 20th Century was already in circulation in 1900, it did not take up that title until 1951. (39)

Readers

Very little is known and perhaps can be known precisely about the readers of the "quality" journals and newspapers. Alvar Ellegard considers that Fraser's readers were "middle to upper

class of good education, seriously minded, tending to Broad Church view and politically Liberal".⁽⁴⁰⁾ His view is based on the evidence of the journal's content. That it was an opinion carrier was clear to him because of the references to the journal made in the contemporary press.

Raymond Williams identified the strong element of projection between the journal and its readers: "they had as their basis the image of a particular kind of reader, in an identifiable class to which the owners and journalists themselves belonged."⁽⁴¹⁾

Leslie Stephen, a particularly critical editor, was disparaging towards his readers. The "country parson's daughters" were most to be feared.⁽⁴²⁾ He stated himself that Cornhill was

a "family" journal and thus gave a clear definition of readers, rather than a reader, and in part offered an explanation for the journal's blandness. Stephen pointed out to Hardy, in relation to Trumpet Major, that journal-readers wanted happy endings to their serialised novels. In a reported conversation between them, Stephen observed that the "heroine married the wrong man" in that novel, to which Hardy replied "they mostly did", "not" insisted Stephen, "in magazines".⁽⁴³⁾

Thackeray was more enthusiastic about Cornhill's readers, and they were, as he was its first editor, quite properly an image rather than a fact. They should be "learned professors, curates, artisans and schoolmasters"⁽⁴⁴⁾ he thought.

This list is confirmed by Allen, who claims that natural history journalists were often the "stranded men, the village parson, country surgeons with a university education who were stuck in the country".⁽⁴⁵⁾ Although rural based, clearly

their identification was with the metropolis. Although Thackerary included "artisans" in his list, he obviously saw his readership vaguely as his own circle enlarged and put on a slightly lower social level.

Stephen's reference to "country parson's daughters" brings in the question of whether the city journals addressed themselves to an exclusively country or city audience. By 1873 there were 889 periodicals available to the provinces, but the circulating libraries made the journals most easily accessible to readers wherever they lived. Fraser's and Temple Bar announced that they catered for both in their full titles: Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country, and Temple Bar: A London Magazine for Town and Country Readers. Some writers appeared well aware that there was a country readership, and in the following extract the writer firmly divided up the readers into town, country and "men of leisure"⁽⁴⁶⁾ who traditionally lived half the year in each area:

Country gentlemen and men of leisure, who know all about the matter already, will do well to skip the following pages, for the writer is not so presumptuous as to suppose he can instruct them on a subject to which they probably have already devoted quite as much time as it is worth; the audience he proposes to address being exclusively a town audience.

(47)

Another way of approaching the readership is through the price of the journals. To subscribe to Mudie's cost a guinea a year.⁽⁴⁸⁾ A Spectator article in 1872 stated that of the 4,600,000 "really comfortable families"⁽⁴⁹⁾ 60,000 families were most likely to afford the subscription. The

anonymous writer must have been counting each family as one person for the statistics to be comparable with population figures at that time. Of course not all those who could afford to wished to subscribe. Mudie's patrons numbered around 25,000 at the time of his death in 1890 and Smith's around 15,000 in 1894. This difference between the numbers who could subscribe, and those who twenty years later actually did, has more to do with the collapse of the three-decker novel than a reduction in spending.

The journals themselves cost 2/6d for quarterlies, 1/- for monthlies while the more specialised (and also the less successful) monthlies could also cost 2/6d as did National, 19th Century and Frasers for example. Art journals with their higher printing costs, and scientific journals where illustrations were used, all ranged from 1/6d to 2/6d.

As the journalists and editors obviously read each other's writings, their own income provides a useful comparison to the possible income of the readers. A London "newspaper man" could earn between £1 and £5 a week depending on his experience,⁽⁵⁰⁾ but the journals distinguished themselves by paying, not wages, but fees. An editor such as Thackeray was paid at the "high rate"⁽⁵¹⁾ for contributions. He received twelve guineas a page for his "Roundabout Papers" which were produced in every monthly issue of Cornhill during his reign as editor. This sum was in addition to the payment he received for editing the journal, and for serialising his novels in it. Stephen did not think the pay for editing

Cornhill "magnificent" but it was sufficient for him to "give up some of my journalism and to set about a book".⁽⁵²⁾ It could not have been less than the sum of £1000 a year offered to Trollope to edit Temple Bar.⁽⁵³⁾ His refusal was more to do with the difference between Temple Bar and St Pauls than with payment.

Mrs. Oliphant declared she earned "the bulk of a year's income"⁽⁵⁴⁾ from just two stories for Cornhill while Mrs. Gaskell was given £2000 for the serialisation of Wives and Daughters. She was able to buy a country house with that sum. Matthew Arnold was approached by several journals for his Oxford lecture on Heine, but declared to his mother that he wanted to "print it, if I can, in the Cornhill, because it both pays best and has much the largest circle of readers."⁽⁵⁵⁾

If we assume that Thackeray earned £363.60p a year for a year's "Roundabout Papers" at five pages per issue, paid at a "high rate" then a journalist could be assumed to earn about £250 to £300 a year for writing one article a month. At the other end of the scale, agricultural labourers were striking in 1874 because their weekly wage was the cost of a year's Cornhill and it was not sufficient to live on. It does not need to be stressed after the above that the prices of the journals and the cycle of production and distribution, restricted the readership to a small group with a relatively high income.

Perhaps the best indicator of the reader is to analyse, not the content of the journal so much as the stance of the editors

and proprietors and try to ascertain, on Raymond Williams' principle, just what the "magic circle" was like, and therefore discover their projected image of the reader.

The "Magic Circle"

The large numbers of journals which flourished and died over this period does not indicate that an equally large population of journalists and editors existed. On the contrary, research points to journalism as a small clique of like-minds. Enough information has already been given to show that they inhabited a small city world of "gentlemen" editors and proprietors, not to mention their friends and relations. If the editor sought for like-minds to write for his journal, for known people with known opinions, a journal was then created which was first of all acceptable to the "magic circle".

The known private friendships of Blackwood show what that like-mindedness between the "magic circle" meant. He was a friend of Delaney (an editor of The Times) and of Lockhart (an editor of Quarterly) and also Thackeray (the first editor of Cornhill). Thackeray in turn was father-in-law to his successor Leslie Stephen. The Times and Quarterly were both Conservative in tone, as was Blackwoods itself. James Payn was once editor of Chambers and of Cornhill. He was also editor of Pall Mall at another point in his career and he was father-in-law to Buckle, another editor of The Times. Furthermore, his introduction to Cornhill came through his close friend Leslie Stephen.

The owner of Cornhill and Pall Mall commanded a large group of editorial friendships. Such reliance on contacts could be double-edged and Blackwood, for instance, in his editorial post, "was at once the patron and victim of his circle of contributors".⁽⁵⁶⁾ This was indeed the case, for the closeness of the circle prevented an evaluation of the need of readers and therefore prevented a break from the norm. However, there was no contemporary dissenting voice against the "magic circle". George Smith treated his Cornhill journalist friends unusually liberally, inviting them to annual Cornhill dinners which were so lavish they became the subject of ridicule in Saturday Review (Saturday). Thackeray retaliated and launched a counter attack on Saturday from his "Roundabout Papers" in Cornhill. George Smith continued to give his dinners up until his death. One advantage of his reputation for liberality was that Smith had no difficulty in finding names to help him launch his new venture: Pall Mall.

The "Magic Circle": Anonymity

Fortnightly was treated with most respect by contemporaries. Stephen, when resigning the editorship of Cornhill cited it as the journal he held in his mind as an ideal:

... the difficulties in the way of making it a serious magazine like the Fortnightly seem to be enormous. To take the Fortnightly tone in regard to politics and theology would be to frighten away all our old readers and I should necessarily take that tone or something like it ...

(57)

It was not only the way in which Fortnightly treated politics and theology, two of Stephen's greatest interests, but it was

also the fact that it did not hide the writer's name which contributed to its high regard. In the 1860s anonymity was the rule. Fortnightly broke it in 1865, by printing right from its first issue, not pseudonyms, not initials, but the full names of its contributors. It was even the practice to veil the editor's name in anonymity at that time, and George Augustus Sala was acting with his usual flamboyance by putting his name openly on the front cover of Temple Bar as editor. Gradually the rest of the journals followed this trend and by the 1880s the anonymous article (except for daily and weekly papers) was as much the exception as a signed article had been in the 1860s.

The reasons for not referring to the writer by name were complicated. There was the element of amateur status to be preserved, where writers need not be known, and therefore need not be assumed to be earning their living so publicly at so socially marginal an employment as journalism.

Anonymity also preserved the "magic circle", and kept it small. Most editors doubled as journalists as did Trollope for example, contributing on fox hunting to 19th Century while editing St Pauls. Kegan Paul was a journalist for Cornhill in 1874 and an editor of New Quarterly in 1879. Stephen often contributed to Cornhill, and Froude for Frasers while acting as editors. Most editors contributed to their own journals, and this was one of the great attractions of the post. If they also helped out their fellow editors no reader knew the extent of those contributions. This sense of "good

fellowship"⁽⁵⁸⁾ was threatened by the display of the names of writers. Moreover, mock debates could no longer be presented without anonymity. Cornhill provides one example of the usual mock debate hidden by the use of initials or pseudonyms. In 1874 when an article called "On the Side of the Maids" was published, speaking up for the rights of domestic servants, it was followed up the next month by a reply "On the Side of the Mistresses". The first carried the initials E.L.L. and the second was signed "a Suffering Mistress". The Mistress attacked E.L.L. as a mischievous young man, and considered herself as mistress of a household, to be in a better position to know the truth about maids than he. In fact E.L.L. was Eliza Lynn Linton⁽⁵⁹⁾ and the "Suffering Mistress" was James M. Capes. The force of his attack would have been entirely lost if he had given his name to his fiction.

The refusal to name names was also a part of the integrity of the journals. They did not use known names to boost sales, except, as Trollope pointed out, in the case of poetry, which was always signed. George Smith, when he started Pall Mall in 1865 resolutely decided against naming his galaxy of "professional writers and men in public life".⁽⁶⁰⁾ He felt the paper should sell on its own merit, but this was not the case. In April 1865 it only sold 613 copies a day, but soon Smith's lawsuits boosted sales. These were court cases to defend allegations of libel, caused by the paper's exposés. Anonymity worked in a gentlemanly manner, and protected the writers themselves, bringing the action against

the proprietor. In 1866 he successfully won his case against Dr. Hunter who complained against the exposé of his advertisements for the cure of consumption, and in 1870, 1872 and 1873, he was again successful in libel cases where individuals felt his paper had unjustly maligned them.⁽⁶¹⁾

The proprietors of journals not classified as "quality" were not so gentlemanly treated. Grenville Murray for example was horsewhipped by the second Lord Carrington at the door of the Conservative Club in St James' Street on June 22nd, 1868 for an attack on him made in Murray's journal Queen's Messenger. Murray denied authorship and Carrington was bound over.⁽⁶²⁾

The "Magic Circle": Identification with Readers

Good Words provides an example of the way in which editors gauged their readership. The shaping force of Good Words was Christianity in general and low church in particular, and the readers were all assumed to be interested in this particular branch of the church. They were also assumed to be bored by their normal diet of Sunday reading, and Good Words set out to provide them with "light and good" religious reading for the Sabbath. The journal looked prosperous and respectable, giving illustrations not only to novels but also to regular rural and scientific articles.

The editor, Donald Macleod,⁽⁶³⁾ was careful and economical in his printing and used double columns, running one article immediately behind another so that no fresh page was turned for a fresh article, as was the case with most of the "quality" journals. In this way he made his journal look like a

newspaper, and also offered in Good Words many more of those words in comparison with other shilling monthlies. An average of fourteen different topics were given to readers, including two serialised novels an issue.

It was the novels, by "Mr Trollope and others of his class"⁽⁶⁴⁾ which caused criticism to be levelled at Good Words. It was accused of lowering standards for Sunday reading by publishing "sensational" novels. An anonymous writer in Record made a detailed onslaught. The rebuke began with an overstated compliment which through its angry exaggeration indicates the importance attached to the journal:

What periodical stood higher than Good Words? Was it not visible in every house one entered? What so familiar as its dull-brown cover? It stared at us from every dead wall; its advertisement covered, at a cost of, we should suppose, a couple of hundred pounds, a whole broadside of The Times newspaper. And by what an array of pious, able, learned names was it not supported, industriously puffed everywhere? Ladies, gentle, loving, holy; men of genius, and piety and pulpit-power; men of standing in science, men occupying the very loftiest ecclesiastical position; it had come to be almost a passport to literary distinction of the highest class to have it said of a man, "he is one of the contributors to Good Words."

(65)

For all its exalted tone, the better to describe the drop in standard, Record's review of the journal shows clearly MacLeod's assumptions about his readers.

He put his journal inside the dull-brown cover (it was also referred to as the "dear old brown cover")⁽⁶⁾ which was quite the right colour for a Sunday. Inside were sermons

and tracts, as was appropriate, but intermingled with these articles were the novels, poems and lighter articles which he had clearly felt the need for amongst the array of "pious, able, learned names", in order to make Sunday reading bearable. The Sunday reading market was successfully cornered by Good Words which makes the action of the editor adroit and commercially sound. It also reflects on the "magic circle's" own desire for reading material on Sunday as well as all the week, in keeping with their own literary tastes.

Good Words' cover was obviously well chosen, and the journals all tried to present their contents in particularly appropriate covers. Temple Bar for instance, had purple covers, in keeping with the purple prose of its editor George Augustus Sala, and he added a motto: "'Sir,' said Dr. Johnson, 'let us take a walk down Fleet Street'" which invited the reader to join the "magic circle". Cornhill's orange cover contained medallions showing rural activities. George Smith was "chaffed about the sower scattering seed with his left hand. Well, the artist might reply, 'I am not an agricultural labourer'".⁽⁶⁷⁾ The artist was in fact a student from the South Kensington School of Art who achieved "a fine breadth, simplicity, and vigour in the small figures of the ploughman, the sower, the reaper and the thresher" which it was felt represented, not a special rural interest, but the fact that the journal was to be enjoyed throughout "the seasons of the year".⁽⁶⁸⁾ The same artist designed the cover for Macmillans which again featured medallions but for this journal they contained the heads of Shakespeare and Milton etc, representing the

bookish approach Macmillan's took to itself and its readers. National firmly waved the flag from its cover and printed a quote from Disraeli: "What is the Tory Party, unless it represents National feeling?". In this way, the journals identified themselves from each other which was their main interest. Cornhill for instance did not print its content on its cover, because "good wine needs no bush".⁽⁶⁹⁾ It was not until much later that Smith realised it was important to be identifiable to readers by its contents not just its cover, and then a contents slip was lightly attached to the cover.

.....000.....

As can be seen, these editors had little direct sense of their readers, but a close awareness of one another. They gauged the market through its effect on their own industry. The opinions they presented were not so much the opinions of the readers, but their own, monitored and controlled by a tight group who primarily wrote for each other. The "magic circle" therefore tended to reach a smaller and smaller portion of the potential readers because their expectations of them were high, standing as they did for their own reading material. When they answered falling circulation figures with increased popularisation they spoke down to readers who were not in their own "circle".

The sense that the journals wrote for each other and not for any other readers is an important one to keep in mind when examining the writings within those journals. There is an awareness of readers shown in the articles themselves, but it is noticeable how like-minded writer and reader appear

to be. It is therefore not surprising to find it was conventional amongst writers to adopt an intimate tone as if writing to a small group, or as was most often the case, to just one other person. The reader as an individual could be taken on the hunt, on the nature ramble and on a search for rare plants and would necessarily be interested in those activities. So many articles read as if the writers were in fact sharing their leisure interest with distant but amiable relatives. In such an atmosphere it was easy to assume that the reader was in total agreement and it was equally easy to assume the level of knowledge held by the reader. Myth building, stereotyping and the reinforcement of favourite general assumptions bred happily in this small closed world.

The journals ostensibly addressed a group of readers who were themselves in a minority within Victorian society in that they had leisure and money. But they wrote primarily to an even smaller group within it, to their own literary, like-minded circle.

The "quality" journals were above all journals of opinion, literary, social, political. Newman was well aware of their importance which he felt was a dangerous influence in society. He criticised readers for allowing them so much power: "... the extreme influence of periodical publications at this day, quarterly, monthly, daily... teach the multitude of men what to think and what to say".⁽⁷⁰⁾ Such a criticism was praise to the "magic circle" who ran the journals and they too relected on their own importance:

The great peculiarity of periodical literature is that it reflects, with minute exactness the moral and intellectual features of the society in which it exists; and there is no particular in which it does this more precisely than in respect of the different degrees of earnestness and power with which different subjects are discussed.

(71)

Howard Mumford Jones endorses this contemporary statement. Writing in 1859: Entering an Age of Crisis he claims "the shaping of opinion was in the hands of earnest journalists, rather than of demagogues or heresy-hunters". (72)

The writings to be analysed in the following sections and chapters of this work were produced and published during all the 'genteel' but turbulent changes in the "quality" journals. The opinions and assumptions of the men and women who tried to enter the "magic circle" had to follow closely the dictates of the editors and proprietors within it. Their opinions and assumptions projected onto their supposed readership, are deeply impressed on the writings. The language analysed in the chapters which follow does not give isolated examples of historical ephemera, but is representative of the most influential and articulate group in Victorian society.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Two

- (1) The journals and newspapers used in this study are listed in the Select Bibliography. The full title of each journal is given in the text with an abbreviated title. The abbreviated title is used throughout.
- (2) There were several journals which were published in both Edinburgh and London. Most displayed this connection in their titles, such as in Edinburgh Review, Chamber's Edinburgh Journal and Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Good Words was also published in both cities.
- (3) Houghton, W.E. (ed) Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals Vols. I-III Toronto and London 1966 (Vols. I-II) 1966 (Vol. III 1979. See Vol. III p. 387
- (4) Williams, R. Long Revolution London 1965 p. 197
- (5) Altick, R.D. The English Common Reader, A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1960-1900 Chicago and London 1957 p. 352
- (6) ibid. c.f. "Periodicals and Newspapers 1851-1900" pp. 348-364
- (7) ibid. p. 353
- (8) ibid. p. 338
- (9) Strachey, J. St. L. The Adventure of Living 1860-1922 London 1922 p. 1966. John St. Loe Strachey was editor of Cornhill from Jul. 1880 til Dec. 1897. He gave it a strong nationalist tone during his period as editor. He was also editor of Spectator and proprietor of Country Gentleman during his career in journalism.
- (10) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. I pp. 321-322
- (11) c.f. Dictionary of National Biography: Memoir of George Smith. Smith's memoir leads the DNB. This distinction and the fact that he was given a more detailed entry than anyone else, shows his importance to the DNB. It was founded by Smith, and his publishing firm subsidised its publication. pp. xxi-lix.
- (12) ibid. pp. xxi-lix.
- (13) for a full history of Pall Mall written in an anecdotal style see Robertson Scott, J.W. The Story of the Pall Mall Gazette Oxford 1950.
- (14) Dibblee, G.B. The Newspapers London 1913 p. 174
- (15) There were a number of journals with titles similar to Cornhill: Temple Bar, St James, St Pauls, Pall Mall, Belgravia, Victoria, Westminster.

- (16) see Eddy, S.L. Jnr. The Founding of the Cornhill Magazine Indiana 1970 p. 42 for an example of advertising.
- (17) Stevenson, R.L. Letters to his Family and Friends Vol. I London 1899 selected and introduced by another member of the "magic circle" Sidney Colvin. c.f. Letter to Mrs. Sitwell May 1877 p. 118
- (18) Altick, op.cit. p. 380
- (19) c.f. Baer, M.B. The Politics of London 1852-1868 Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Iowa 1976 p. 99
- (20) Altick, op.cit. p. 394
- (21) Coleman, D.C. The British Paper Industry 1465-1860 Oxford 1958 c.f. Chapter VIII "The Period of Expansion 1800-1860" pp. 207-212
- (22) Altick, op.cit. p. 354
- (23) cited by Eddy, op.cit. p. 34
- (24) Altick, op.cit. p. 359
- (25) Tinsley published Desperate Remedies (1871) and A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873) for Hardy.
- (26) Ellegard, A. The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid Victorian Britain Goteborg 1957 p. 32
- (27) Altick, op.cit. Appendix C pp. 391-396
- (28) Houghton, W.E. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 Yale 1964 pp. 104-105
- (29) cited in Wellesley, op.cit. p. 611 Vol II
- (30) cited in Eddy, op.cit. p. 34
- (31) Altick, op.cit. pp. 323-4
- (32) Williams, op.cit. p. 196
- (33) Anon. Spectator Mar. 5 1859 p. 267
cited in Wellesley, op.cit. Vol II p. 5
- (34) Allen, D.A. The Naturalist in Britain London 1976 Chapter 9 "The Parting of the Ways" p. 182
- (35) ibid. p. 183
- (36) Henkin, L.J. Darwinism in the English Novel 1860-1910
The Impact of Evolution on Victorian Fiction New York 1963 p. 172

- (37) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. I p. 555
- (38) ibid. p. 699
- (39) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. II p. 624
- (40) Ellegard, op.cit. p. 33
- (41) Williams, op.cit. p. 200
- (42) Maitland, F.W. The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen London 1906 p. 276
- (43) ibid. p. 277
- (44) Altick, R.D. "The Literature of an Imminent Democracy" p.221 in 1859: Entering an Age of Crisis (eds) Appleman, P., Madden, W.A. and Wolff, M. Indiana 1959.
- (45) Allen, op.cit. p. 187
- (46) Higgins, M.J. "Horsekeeping and Horsedealing" Cornhill May 1861 p. 614
- (47) ibid. p. 614
- (48) Griest, G.L. Mudie's Circulating Library Newton Abbot 1970 p. 79
- (49) Anon. "The Numbers of the Comfortable" Spectator 1872 cited in Griest, ibid. p. 79
- (50) Phillips, E. How to Become a Journalist London 1895 pp. 13-14
- (51) George Smith, Memoir, DNB op.cit. p. xxxvii
- (52) Maitland, op.cit. p. 256
- (53) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. III p. 387
- (54) cited in Maitland, op.cit. p. 269
- (55) George Smith, Memoir, DNB op.cit. p. xxxvii
- (56) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. I p. 7
- (57) cited in Maitland, op.cit. pp. 353-4. A letter to George Smith dated Oct. 31 1882.
- (58) Wellesley, op.cit. Vol. I p. 9
- (59) Eliza Lynn Linton (1822-1898) was one of a surprisingly high number of female journalists in this male dominated world. She contributed to Cornhill, Macmillans, North British, St Pauls, Temple Bar, Fortnightly, Fraser's, National, 19th Century and New Quarterly.
- (60) George Smith, Memoir, DNB op.cit. p. xlv

- (61) ibid. p. xlvi and p. liii
- (62) Bourne, H.R.F. English Newspapers Vol. II London 1881 p. 303
- (63) see Smith, S. Donald Macleod of Glasgow, a Memoir and a Study London 1926 for a biography of this editor.
- (64) Anon. An Exposure of the Record Newspaper and its Treatment of Good Words pamphlet Apr. 23 (no year given) reprinted from Patriot p. 4
- (65) Anon. Good Words, The Theology of its Editor and Some of its Contributors pamphlet reprinted from Record 1863 p. 2
- (66) Smith, S. op.cit. p. 111
- (67) Cook, Sir E. Literary Recreations London 1918 p. 110
- (68) cited in Eddy, op.cit. p. 16. It was stated by Leonard Huxley.
- (69) Cook, op.cit. pp. 110-1
- (70) Houghton, op.cit. p. 104 (cited)
- (71) Stephens, F. "Keeping up Appearances" Cornhill Sep. 1861 p. 305
- (72) Mumford Jones, H. "1859 and the Idea of Crisis" p. 23 in 1859 op.cit.

SECTION II

LANDSCAPE WITHOUT LABOUR

II:i

Section II sets out three distinct areas of leisure interests covered by the 'quality' journals. I have given these the titles of "The Aesthetic View of Nature", "The Scientific View of Nature" and "The Hedonist View of Nature". These terms were not employed by the Victorian writers themselves. I chose them because the terms encapsulate the assumptions of the writers within each view of nature. In the "aesthetic" view, for instance, they are concerned with "good taste" and "pure beauty rather than... other considerations".⁽¹⁾ Similarly the "scientific" view of nature is the view held by those who were interested in natural history. They were concerned with a study of nature based on close observation, and a systematic collection of natural objects. The "hedonist" view of nature was employed by hunters and writers on hunting, who felt that the enjoyment of their sport was of prime importance. These words apart from being applicable in their strictest meaning, carry associations which also convey the meaning of these individual views of nature. Thus "aesthetic" carries connotations of elitism and snobbery. The "scientific" view of nature in

contrast was a practical view which did not offer beauty, or other intangibles such as the soul of nature but instead a practical purpose for being in nature. The sensual element in hedonism is made manifest in Chapter Five in the huntsman's joke and manly 'chaff'.

My three categories are not all-inclusive of the interests in nature covered by the journals. In particular I have omitted the nature essay, written by the nature lover. The nature essay has a distinct literary style and history,⁽²⁾ but as it does not promote a leisure activity which the reader and writer could enjoy, it is not included in this work. The more lyrical style which was required for the nature essay, as the terms used for it: "prose-poem...vignettes...word painting" all indicate makes it a part of the "aesthetic" view of nature. A sure indicator of this fact is the presentation of landscape within the nature essay. Two examples from the "quality" journals illustrate this static pictorial quality in the nature essay:

You are at a height of some hundreds of feet above the sharp ledges, foam-fringed even in quiet weather. Three-fourths of the whole circle of the horizon is occupied by sea. From your advanced outpost you look east and south along vast ranges of cliff, where headland succeeds headland in interminable series, sinking into vagueness in the extreme distance. A few sea birds are hovering and screaming in mid air, and perhaps a passing

raven just croaks out an appropriate sentiment as he floats past. Far away, the sail of a solitary fishing boat suggests the dangers of the inhospitable coast. And then, looking out seawards, you see vast shining levels gradually melting into broad shadows, and the shadows succeeded by more distant breadths of light, until at last the eye is carried to the remote band of haze, of which you cannot say whether it is sky or ocean.

(3)

The corn should not all be carried, for the wheat, standing in shocks upon the hillside has a very pretty effect in the distance. There should be meadows within view, in which the rich green aftermath, still ankle deep, has not yet been fed off. There should be the fine stately hedgerow timber of the midland counties, or the hanging copses and long woods of the west and south. There should be the cool dark green of the turnips, contrasting the pale yellow stubble, looking sheeny and silky in the sun. There should be a farmhouse or two, and a village spire in the hazy distance; and the foliage may be flecked here and there with two or three rust spots as a foil to the surrounding verdure. Here is an ordinary view enough.

(4)

But it is not an "ordinary view". It is a recognisable landscape painting, the more so because of a lack of figures. Both extracts are taken from articles in Cornhill in the late 1870s. The first anonymous writer presented an imagined seascape which is divided up like a painting, with far distance: the shining levels taking the eye to the horizon; and middle distance: the boats and the sea birds; and foreground: cliffs and a raven. T.E. Kebbell (who will be discussed in his role as a writer on hunting in Chapter five following) looked with a painter's eye, or rather an eye trained by painters, to his

view in the second quotation. He concentrated on colour rather than depth of field. His landscape has objects all harmoniously arranged with colours nicely contrasting, from the pale yellow stubble to the dark green turnips shading off to the rich green of the meadows. He states himself that the trees should provide spots of rust as a "foil", and that the shocks of wheat form a pretty "effect".

The nature essay could be found in newspapers and journals throughout the period. Graphic for instance, included a "vignette" or two within the regular column headed "Rural Notes", and all the "quality" journals included it in their offerings.

The nature essay had its part to play within the languages employed in the journals, but being an inactive part of the "aesthetic" view it has been omitted from further study.

As to the journalists themselves, it will be seen in Chapter three that the exponents of landscape art were occasional writers, and only one was himself an editor. In the "scientific" and "hedonist" views the writers exemplify the practicality they profess. They were more prolific in their output in comparison to the holders of the "aesthetic" view, and therefore presented themselves as less of an elite or avant-garde. Even though they too viewed themselves as being part of a cultural minority, they did not, for the most part, have an amateur interest in journalism. Richard Jefferies'

position is made clear amongst the writers discussed in the chapters which follow. His inability to secure a fixed style and so a regular income is illustrated by contrast. Of all the successful regular contributors mentioned in these chapters, Jefferies appears, when placed amongst his peers, to be in a marginal position. He could employ literary devices in order to be published and he had his regular placements, but for reasons which will be later discussed, he seemed unable to entirely corner a market which became his own.

FOOTNOTES: Introduction to Section II

- (1) The Collins' English Dictionary definition.
- (2) c.f. Keith, W.J. The Rural Tradition Toronto 1975
- (3) Anon. "Stray Thoughts on Scenery" Cornhill Jul. 1875
p.75
- (4) Kebbel, T.E. "The Poetry of September" Cornhill
Sep. 1877 p. 351

CHAPTER THREE

The Aesthetic View of Nature

Landscape Without Labour: Articles

This chapter sets out to explore first, the language used by the exponents of landscape art and second, the language of the reviews of the most popular landscapes of the period. Analyses of these writings reveal the "aesthetic" view of nature.

For the Victorians, to be able to draw was an accomplishment in a woman, and a sign of sensitivity in a man. For both sexes, to be able to display a knowledge of art was an important part of social intercourse.

Every educated person has good taste, and every person of taste is a critic of art. It is quite permissible to an educated man that he should be ignorant of science and care nothing for politics, nor theology; it is even allowable that he should confess to entire ignorance of vintages, to imperfect knowledge of the points of a horse, to inability to criticise an actor or to appreciate a singer; but he may not confess himself incompetent to criticise a picture or admit that he knows nothing of art.

(1)

These "educated persons" and those who aspired to that title, looked to the "quality" journals for up-to-date information on the latest fashions in art, and the languages best suited to display their knowledge and "good taste". F. Warre-Cornish⁽²⁾ for instance, using the guise of the "Country Critic" in his article for Cornhill felt obliged to explain that he was not

"wholly Boeotian" proved it by naming the journals he read to keep up with the latest movements in art: Saturday, Pall Mall Budget, Quarterly, Fortnightly, Contemporary and Art Journal.⁽³⁾ Similarly, H. Blackburn⁽⁴⁾ in his review of "English Art in 1883" for National, quoted Athenaeum and Saturday as "two journals where deliberate art criticism might be looked for".⁽⁵⁾

The illustrations in Figs. 1 and 2 "Miss Wyldwyle was sketching"⁽⁶⁾ and "A Surprise" both show situations in romances where the heroine is engaged in making sketches in the open. These illustrations taken from Cornhill and London Society are representative of the standard of art work in the journals, as well as corroborations of the presence of sketching in the culture of the time. "The Girl Stood Motionless, Subdued by It" in Fig. 3 shows a moment in a serialised novel where a new painting is displayed to neighbours. The character who owned the painting was not presented as eccentric for his social gathering set round his latest artistic acquisition.

The subject of landscape art was a new and fashionable topic in the 1860s which the editors of the journals fully exploited, adding articles on this new art subject to their regular annual reviews of the Royal Academy Exhibition. Landscape art and its avant-garde: medieval art, had its followers and its opponents. Both were given room to expound their views. The reign of popularity for landscape art helped to consolidate and build onto the old Romantic assumptions concerning nature. The word



MISS WYLDWYL WAS SKETCHING.



A SURPRISE.

See THE RECOVERED ESTATE, page 199.



THE GIRL STOOD MOTIONLESS, SUEDED BY IT.

nature itself, as applied to this new art form, acquired two extra meanings. A picture such as Frith's Margate Sands was admired because it was close to nature. It was recognisable and real and therefore natural in the sense of an antonym to artificial.⁽⁷⁾ A landscape picture had to follow nature or interpret nature in order to be acclaimed⁽⁸⁾ which is not the same as being naturalistic like Frith. The exponents of landscape art believed that it was not enough to provide a record of nature but that its soul or spirit had also to be shown in the picture. The presence of soul or spirit then gave an interest to the landscape picture - the interest which hitherto had been provided by figures. The artist should pass on to the spectator a relation with nature which revealed tender care, loving knowledge and a special spiritual relation so as to uplift the city dweller.⁽⁹⁾

Having banished nature from our life, and
imprisoned ourselves in smoky wildernesses
where beauty is not, we long painfully for
the relief of sweet colour and pure air,
for the comfort that is in clouds and
mountains.

(10)

(11)

Even though a photograph might be considered more natural,⁽¹²⁾ a bare recording of nature was not a requirement of landscape art. It was the interpretation of nature which made the landscape picture art.⁽¹³⁾ Despite the development of photography during this period, the term "photograph" was consistently used in a derogatory sense by art critics much as "Zolaism" was used in relation to novels. The soul of nature could not be photographed.

Let our landscape painters, by all means, continue to give literal transcripts of facts; the more truth the better. But then let the intellect, let the laws of pictorial composition, impose sequence, subordination, interest and unity. To dry bones, sinews and anatomy of nature, let there be added life and expression.

(14)

Alternative Views of Nature: Article 1

A Country Critic (pseud: F. Warre-Cornish) "Thoughts of a Country Critic" Cornhill Magazine, Dec. 1874 pp.717-727.

An important factor to take into account when considering the languages employed for paintings at this time is that there were no coloured reproductions available. Much attention was therefore given in reviews to colour, and this necessity led to the coinage of new words. Warre-Cornish's article took the form of a story where the narrator, a "country critic" attempted to learn how to appreciate a new art form. He began by condemning the adjectives employed by advocates of the new form to describe colour: "intimate...precious...sharp...swift...resonant...sweet" (15) Warre-Cornish objected to the avant-garde language of the devotees of medieval art. The persona of a "country critic" helped him to stress his objections, for it was not the language a "country critic" employed in relation to art. However, he had to concede that these adjectives related to the purpose of the colour rather than the colour itself. When faced with a room furnished and decorated in the medieval style, he at first tried to describe the colours to the readers without employing the same vocabulary: "tea green...snuff coloured green...green that made one's teeth creak to look at it.." (16) The resulting

heavy irony fails to give a clear description. Eventually the "country critic" had to discover that the key to an adequate description of colour lay in mood, and his language reflected this grasp.

I fell into a sort of waking doze, in which the objects around me seemed gradually to harmonise into something like a tune in a minor key. I felt the charm of grace and refinement. This rococo collection had after all some unity. I seemed to find the key to it in the half-tone grey-green atmosphere which pervaded all. No bright colour was admitted, except here and there a sunlight patch on a Persian carpet. All the life represented had something of incompleteness or decay. There was no midday heat or splendour or strength. The yellow allegories in the windows were worn and wasted; the green of the walls was that of a hortus siccus; the men and women in the drawings were all sick and sorry.

(17)

After reaching this realisation, the "country critic", by no means convinced, broke the spell for the readers by offering an alternative aesthetic view which condemned the kind of art he had been describing:

The sadness of tone in all this Castle of Indolence so oppressed me that I got up and leant out of the window, and gazed upon the bright chestnut trees in full leaf, rich buttercups in Christchurch meadow....

(18)

The alternative view is in fact a fragment of a landscape picture. It is a view of nature which is presented as harmonious and healthy in opposition to the unhealthiness of the "Castle of Indolence" art form. This method helped Warre-Cornish to show that the art form he disliked was artificial, simply by opening a window, literally and metaphorically onto another preferred art form. The country

from which Warre-Cornish said he came, and the natural things outside the window, combine to give force to his attack on the unhealthiness of medieval art. He demonstrated his own taste and moral healthiness by looking out of the window at natural things so presented that they were another view of nature within a landscape picture.

Alternative Views of Nature: Article 2

Jefferies, R. (19) "Outside London" Part II Chambers Journal (20)
Feb. 21, 1885 pp. 119-121.

Jefferies, in this article, employs the same device which presents an alternative aesthetic view. Like Warre-Cornish, he too wished to persuade the reader that this own view was closer to nature than that of another artist. However, Jefferies was aware that the artist was not only an interpreter of nature, but also a person who was earning money. He placed this unusual awareness in the forefront of his article:

In those fields of which I was writing the other day (21) I found an artist at work on his easel; and a pleasant nook he had chosen. His brush did its work with a steady and sure stroke that indicated command of his materials. He could delineate whatever he selected with technical skill at all events. He had pitched his easel where two hedges formed an angle, and one of them was full of oak trees. The hedge was singularly full of 'bits' - bryony, tangles of grasses, berries, boughs half tinted and boughs green, hung as it were with pictures like the wall of a room. Standing as near as I could without disturbing him, I found that the subject of his canvas was none of these. It was that old stale and dull device of a rustic bridge spanning a shallow stream crossing a lane. Some figure stood on the bridge - the old, old trick. He was filling up the hedge of the lane with trees from the hedge, and they were cleverly executed, but why draft them into this fusty scheme which

3:7

has appeared in every child's sketch book for fifty years? Why not have simply painted the beautiful hedge at hand, purely and simply a hedge hung with pictures for any one to copy? The field in which he had pitched his easel is full of fine trees and 'good effects'. But no; we must have the ancient and effete old story. This is not all the artist's fault; because he must in many cases paint what he can sell; and if his public will only buy effete old stories, he cannot help it. Still, I think if a painter did paint that hedge in its fullness of beauty, just simply as it stands in the mellow autumn light, it would win approval of the best people, and that ultimately, a succession of such work would pay.

(22)

The usual assumption in the journals concerning an artist seen at work in the landscape was that he or she was both amateur and inspired. The thought that the artist might, like Jefferies, be in nature for other reasons than amusement or love was not presented to the readers. Jefferies was a working journalist, and when walking in the fields near his suburban home he was earning his living taking "nature notes" as well as exercise, so his assumptions toward an artist were professional rather than amateur. However, the orientation towards taste and discernment, those qualities of the "best people", was equally present in the article, and Jefferies felt certain, despite his lack of amateur status, that he knew the correct aesthetic view of nature.

It was the subject matter of the artist he met which confirmed for Jefferies his assumption that here was a fellow professional in the fields. "That old stale device of a rustic bridge" (23) was not present in the view, and therefore the artist was working for profit rather than pleasure. Jefferies,

3:8

not caring for the hackneyed picture of nature being produced, offered a more pleasing arrangement of landscape as a better picture for the "best people". He accented the "mellow autumn light" and the field's "fine trees" all in the "fullness of beauty"⁽²⁴⁾ as well as the hedge being "tangled" and containing "boughs half tinted and boughs green". These "effects" of language created a landscape which was more aesthetically pleasing to Jefferies than the painted one of a rustic bridge.

.....oOo.....

A link between the country critic and Jefferies is to be found in the format of their articles. They each offered an alternative view of nature in opposition to the one they disliked. The credibility of their preferred view entirely rested on personal authenticity. The "Country Critic" opened a window and brought in his view. Jefferies was in a position to look simultaneously over the artist's shoulder and at the landscape being reproduced. They both used the personal pronoun and a personal style (tinged with anecdote) in order to further establish the honesty of their aesthetic view, as opposed to the artificiality (in both cases) of the views they attacked. These devices were commonly employed in the writing forms for the aesthetic leisure interest in nature.

Similarly, both the above articles claim to be written (as is apparent in the text) in one season of the year. Yet they were both published at very different seasons. The "Country Critic"

looked out onto buttercups and his article appeared in December. Jefferies described an autumn scene and his article was printed in February. Art is not seasonal (except for the Academy) and can be published at any time; equally, a nature article was not seen to have any immediacy.

Naturalism versus Functionalism: Article 1

W.R. Greg (25) "The Special Beauty conferred by Imperfection and Decay", Contemporary Review, Oct.1865, pp.197-217.

Greg employed the most gushing language for an "aesthetic" view of nature:

What, in a word, is the source, the meaning, the reason for that strange and exquisite picturesque charm and eye-delight so habitually clinging round decadence and ruin, and so intuitively, and perhaps reluctantly, recognised as beauty even by the sternest utilitarian.

(26)

The language is choked with adjectives and adverbs which are an exaggerated version of the words so disliked by the "Country Critic". However, no-one opened a window onto Greg's view of nature.

What object more unlovely than a straight strong wall of masonry, not to be climbed over or broken through, with not a stone fallen away or out of line? Yet what object more beautiful, more fascinating to the artist, more pleasant to the general eye than the same wall old, shattered, full of breaches, covered with ivy that each year undermines and loosens it yet more, and so ruined that the cattle or the deer it was intended to confine creep through it or leap over it at pleasure?

(27)

It is Romantic wild nature which Greg celebrates in his love of the wall. It does not confine the cattle or the deer any more and has lost its function. Therein lay its beauty for Greg, once it ceased to be utilitarian and instead, by its ruinous state, became for him part of nature.

It is worth pointing out here that his old wall might be the same kind of "stale old device" which Jefferies condemned. Certainly Jefferies felt that such images were all too regrettably present in his time. The emphasis given by Greg in the above quotation leans wholeheartedly toward his enthusiasm for the new medieval form and shows no doubt or hesitation. His inability to describe the old wall as simply as the new one indicates his enthusiasm. Embroidery is added by the presence of the cattle and deer. Greg did not restrict himself to the present when describing the ivy, but almost longingly looked ahead for even more decadence. The words he used: "beautiful....fascinating....pleasing" are sensual terms but the pleasure is mental. That is, it springs from the imagination rather than coming direct through the senses. Greg logically and ruthlessly then extended his notion of beauty in an application which he described as "the most crucial of all". In concentrating on this culminating picture, which, he felt, would prove his point to the reader once and for all, his language altered and at first produces an uneasy feeling that he might be satiric in intention:

Let us go to Ireland, and look at the solid, sensible excellent cottages built (say) on Lord Lansdown's estates in Kerry, drained, slated and windowed, warm, firm, impervious to weather - answering completely, in fact, every purpose which houses are made to serve. They are not only not beautiful, but the Mind has absolutely to refute the Eye, the Social and Moral has to silence the aesthetic sense, in order to prevent us from pronouncing them positively ugly. A few hundred yards away, in the very next valley, stands the normal Irish cabin; no window, no chimney, holes in the roof and wall doing duty for both; the rotten thatch half off, the rain coming in at fifty chinks, the floor wet and filthy, the pestilential dung heap steaming at the side, the family dirty and in rags with the pig among their feet and the fowl upon their shoulders, and what scene can be more picturesque or to an artist's eye, more beautiful? Nay, every one of the deplorable and condemnable features I have mentioned helps to constitute the beauty of the object; if it were one whit less ruinous and nasty, it would be pro tanto less gratifying to the mere visual sense and fancy of the spectator; and we have to curb and do violence to ourselves, and to call up many thoughts 'unborrowed from the eye' before we can express a sense of actual gratification in contemplating the picture, or refrain from incontinently sitting down to paint it. The cabin has no pleasurable associations to make it beautiful nor ought it to be beautiful on the utilitarian theory. (28)

It is the last few lines of the quotation which reassure the reader that the passage was not meant to be ironic. For Greg, despite the energy with which he presented an adverse view of his "most crucial" example, wished the reader to see the family and the hovel only as objects in harmony, only as a part of the landscape. They are representative of wild nature because they are not housed in a functional cottage which would serve their human needs on a utilitarian basis. Housed in a model cottage they would not be beautiful to Greg. He meant the article to be read quite literally and not as satire. In his description

of the wall he showed his personal pleasure, or fancy, but the novel tells of it in spite of his "conscience". Of course in describing a bigger picture he must go into the description in greater detail, and these more graphic details in part explain the difference in the language rather than any change in intention in the writer. The actual words used also offer an explanation. They are no longer smooth and fanciful. The thatch is described as "rotten", the floor "wet and filthy", there is a "pestilential" dung heap "steaming" and the family are "dirty". And yet these harsher words are not describing a scene he disliked, but one which he greatly admired.

In the possibility of a scene being both "nasty" and "beautiful" lies the crux of Greg's aesthetic sense. The simple harsh words are most often the vocabulary of attack on a view of nature or art opposed to the writer's own view. Here they tell that the object remained beautiful despite being presented as if ugly. Greg firmly advocated that the viewer must be a spectator or artist only, in relation to the view, so that no compassionate or human response could mar the correct aesthetic enjoyment.

Naturalism versus Functionalism: Article 2

P.G. Hamerton (29) "The Place of Landscape Painting Amongst the Fine Arts", Fortnightly Review, Dec.1 1865, pp.197-217.

Compare the use of the same simple harsh language by Hamerton in his account of an actual industrialised landscape:

Long rows of cottages, whose monotonous brick fronts are dark with soot; heaps of ashes on the black acre of building ground yet unoccupied: foul ordure visible everywhere; filthy children playing amongst it with bits of broken pot; behind the cottages a roaring factory, six or seven stories high, its vast monotonous wall pierced with a hundred windows, all alike, and all ugly - half an acre of ugliness, set up vertically against the sky, to bar the sunshine out; great chimney stacks for towers, - ay, fifty of them within a mile, - pouring opaque clouds of foul coal-smoke into the vitiated atmosphere. No human beauty left there has not been marred beyond recognition by the life the men and women lead there from infancy; no costume but shapeless fustian for the men, having neither grace nor gaiety; and long straight pinafores for the factory girls bound round their waists with greasy leather belts.

(30)

The similarities in the language used in both articles lie in the details and the energy of the simple terms. Hamerton's adjectives "filthy" and "foul" are synonyms of Greg's own words. But Hamerton's gaze is on a functional industrial landscape. He declared it to be ugly. Greg looked on a rural landscape⁽³¹⁾ and used the same words to declare it to be beautiful.

The important point about both views is that they fail to encompass the figures in the landscape as human beings. Greg's family were a part of wild nature, in harmony with his view of beauty. Hamerton's working men and women were incidents of ugliness in a generally ugly scene. Their similarity in language and their opposition in intention reveals the final reason why Greg called his example "the most crucial of all" for he employed a 'city' language to put forward the reasons why his view should not be admired. He was confident, that

despite bringing the full weight of the city-country contrast to bear, his "beauty" would still be observed. To withstand such a presentation the example must be "the most crucial of all".

Hamerton's view of nature was aesthetically influenced not by the Medievalists, but by Classicism. He reveals a certain disillusionment with his own time: "Noble human life in a great and earnest age is better artistic material than wild nature; but human life in an age like ours is not."⁽³²⁾ In Hamerton's search for a powerful image to display his preference for inanimate nature he unwittingly becomes absurd: "A mountain does not know how to be ridiculous. A mountain cannot dress in bad taste. Neither is it capable of degrading itself by vice."⁽³³⁾ And in this his writing brings out a further element in the "aesthetic" view of nature: its misanthropy.

He does have an English contrast to set against his distaste for his own industrial culture. His like of mountains for their purity and clarity (no fudging of moral issues with mountains as there is with men) did not mean he could not find comfort close at hand:

To anyone having the sense of beauty, - and all true artists have it, - nothing can well be more depressing than the influences of such a scene. The heart sinks, the sight suffers under them. Yet within the distance of a day's ramble there are wild moors where the heather blooms, and little dells where pure streams fall over rocks of sandstone, under green fern, into lucid pools, where the crimson-spotted trout dart swiftly.

(34)

The language he employs in praise is far more difficult to read than the language of opposition. It is also difficult to feel convinced that Hamerton's landscape is just as beautiful as his industrial landscape is ugly.

A Manifesto for Landscape Art

J.A. Symonds (35) "The Present Position of Landscape Painting in England", Cornhill Magazine, Mar. 1865, pp.281-292.

Symonds is the first of these writers to trouble to set out clearly a manifesto for his chosen art form. Landscape art was, according to Symonds, a moral art form because it was "more reflective...spiritual" and "less external" than any other. Yet Symonds knew it to be an art form which denied humans the centre stage - even though the only object in a landscape to be expected to have a moral sense must be the human figure. Instead Symonds expected the viewer to draw the moral out of a view of inanimate nature represented on canvas. The artist must transmit, in the selection and organisation of material, the moral point. Symonds, sharing Greg 's avant-garde position, also admitted that the reader must learn the correct way to look at landscape art in order to find the moral.

Symond's article began with a formal compliment to Ruskin,⁽³⁶⁾ and then went on to draw a contrast between the attitudes toward nature through the Greek, the Renaissance and the present "civilisation". "We cannot but perceive how much of our attention is directed to inanimate nature" (37) he observed,

in comparing his own time with the Greeks who saw the human in all things, making nature animate with Gods and Goddesses. Symonds did not find his present day inadequate in comparison, except in its response to the human body:

our clumsy clothing, and the awkwardness of our movements, distract attention from the beauty of man, and leave it free to occupy itself with other kinds of natural grace.

(38)

Here we have the main reason for excluding figures in the landscape: they have no aesthetic value. Symonds elaborates this point:

The business of public life is not sufficient to exercise the faculties of all the cultivated classes. There remains a large body of men who have to seek within themselves the object of their interest, and to whom politics present no attractions. Hence solitude of soul, and introspection, and the melancholy which loves to be alone with nature, have a place in modern psychology. A morbid sense of isolation results, which has been admirably depicted by Goethe in his Faust. This character, to classic thinkers, would have seemed unreal and monstrous in the last degree. They would have shrunk from its unhealthy self-analysis and constant brooding over private pains. But in modern society it has a deep and far-spread truth. It represents a consideration of human life which is almost universal, and which constitutes the special gravity of modern, as distinct from ancient modes of thought. The vast importance of the individual in the face of nature and of God is here asserted...Nature is always made the antidote of human ills. Its peace contrasts with our unrest, its unbroken continuity with our changefulness, the order of its recurring seasons with our chaotic history, the durability of its powers with our ephemeral lease of life, its calm indifference with our fretfulness and intolerance of pain.

(39)

3:17

Just as Greg did not mean to employ irony, so Symonds did not criticise Faust in his statement that "classic thinkers" (he refers to Plato) would find the central character "unreal and monstrous in the last degree". Similarly, although Symonds claimed that nature "is always made the antidote of human ills" he considered his view to be "modern".

Yet all his statements carry the reverberations of Romanticism. For example: his confidence that there was but one true way of responding to nature and that nature's truest expression was found in poetry and landscape art. The contrast drawn between the natural world and "civilised men" also enforces this awareness:

Its peace contrasts with our unrest, its
unbroken continuity with our changefulness,
the order of its recurring seasons with our
chaotic history, the durability of its powers
with our ephemeral lease of life, its calm
indifference with our fretfulness and
intolerance of pain.

(40)

Symonds was certain of those contrasts. The very number of them underlines his sense of right. Nature to those who held the "aesthetic" view was peaceful, changeless, ordered, enduring and indifferent. Nature is then defined by this view as all that men are not. It is not defined in itself but rests solely on a definition of man. The article culminates in the manifesto for landscape art:

The highest claims of landscape painting rest upon the promptitude with which it has arisen to satisfy, to lead, to strengthen, to instruct, and to immortalise these modern tendencies of human intellect. It is a new form of art, because the need from which it springs is new; because the phase of life to which it is adapted has so recent an origin.... landscape began - at first feebly, as an adjunct to figure painting, then timidly asserting for itself an independent sphere, and lastly, in our days, rising to the dignity of an original fine art in which the spirit of the age reflects itself no less distinctly than in music and in poetry.

(41)

Symonds has already shown that he considers one of the "modern tendencies" to be a Faust-like introspection. But the special need for landscape art had come, according to Symonds, from the growth of cities. The art form is city bred and for city people:

The fields which we have known, the flowers which we have loved, by painting are secure to us from the mutabilities of time. We carry pieces of the country into our London homes.

(42)

.....oOo.....

The most pronounced feature of the writings on landscape art is the assumption that the reader was in agreement with the writer's own convictions. There was an awareness that others "less educated"⁽⁴³⁾ might not agree or might need persuasion to agree, but these were not assumed to be the readers of the articles.

The individual supporters of the "aesthetic" view shown considered themselves to be either part of an avant-garde or possessed of an elite sensibility. Greg set out the

fashionable medieval taste where beauty was found in decay. Warre-Cornish felt obliged to adopt the persona of a "country critic" in order to demolish this taste. He employed literary devices - narrative, an anecdotal tone, a bluff no-nonsense voice - in order to persuade the reader away from the unhealthiness, as he saw it, of this taste. Jefferies preferred to attack a particular kind of landscape art for its staleness and its lack of appreciation for the real beauties of nature. Presenting himself as a nature Rambler, he was in fact closer to the "country critic" whom Warre-Cornish parodied. Symonds and Hamerton presented the more conventional attitudes of their time which are recognisably based on a Victorian version of Romanticism.

Hamerton, in keeping with Warre-Cornish, and Jefferies, did not try to balance his alternative view. All three presented the form they opposed in greater length and detail than their own alternative view of nature. All Warre-Cornish did was open a window. Jefferies took far longer to criticise the picture he saw painted than the one he claimed was before his eyes. It is not just that Hamerton was imprecise and literary in his contrast to his city view, it was that he, in common with Jefferies and Warre-Cornish, did not appear to feel the need to balance the contrast in order to convince the readers. The writers used the power of associations (country-city, natural-artificial) firmly rooted in their culture to complete their arguments for them.

Symonds, Greg and Hamerton all shared a confident tone which

spoke out to the reader, even when in Greg 's case, he was somewhat smugly aware that he represented an avant-garde. The three pro-landscape art writers also shared a distaste for their industrialised and city-dominated lives, but they did not claim, like Jefferies and the "country critic" (even if only in name), to be from the country they praised. Greg used the term "agricultural boor" for the person who would find "fertile lands" more beautiful than his preferred wild and unfunctional landscapes.

So by a paradox, the city dwellers with taste, leisure and education, proclaimed themselves to be the only ones to appreciate nature aesthetically. They did not move away from the city they energetically condemned, with its ugliness (and its journals for their writings and reading) but remained to promote the paradox.

Landscape Without Labour: Pictures

In 1978, the Arts Council held a retrospective exhibition: Great Victorian Pictures at the Royal Academy. The exhibition comprised the most popular pictures of the Victorian period, selected not because they are now considered to be the best, but simply because the Victorians liked them most. The catalogue reveals the criterion for selection:

'To move the heart of the million' was not always the fanciful ambition of a Victorian artist. The present exhibition brings together many of the pictures which achieved that goal.....

It contained Millais' Bubbles, of course, and Landseer's Stag at Bay but these are not my concern. It is the popular landscapes in the pictures and in reviews which are of interest.

Wild Nature and the Invisible Labourer: Picture 1

A Spate in the Highlands by Peter Graham, first exhibited in 1866:

The Spate shows a Scots mountain stream in flood, tumbling over rocks, furiously rushing toward the viewer. The sky is stormy and in the middle ground a drover flings up his arms to drive back his cattle from a broken bridge.

Graham's Spate was one of the many pictures which attracted crowds when it was first exhibited. The following quotations point to its impact upon the critics:

This is beyond a doubt, the most striking landscape of this year's exhibition.

(45)

A singularly effective and beautiful landscape by Mr P. Graham is hung below the line, and consequently fronted by a group of persons.

(46)

Its supreme merit was acknowledged by all who saw it. Immediately purchased by a dealer, it was resold doubtless at a large profit, within a few days.

(47)

The importance of the quotations lies in the key words which described the presentation of wild nature: "striking" and "effective". These words indicate the energy in the picture which is dramatic. The reviewers were inspired to use grandiose language to convey the old Romantic assumption that nature was beautiful when wild.

Fig. 3:6



3:22

Stern and soul subduing. (48)

Impressiveness of Nature in her grandest mood. (49)

The mountain torrent that dashes its wild waters onward evince a bold hand and an eye vigilant to mark Nature's grand phenomena. (50)

Large and impressive as Nature herself....
Dramatic treatment of Nature.... Thus action and even speech are given to dumb nature. (51)

It can be seen that the presentation of nature in the picture is described in terms of its effect upon the mind, and soul, and stirred the writers to recreate the drama, if not the melodrama. "Dashes its wild waters onward" being a typical example of this identification. Graham is made a part of his scene in that he too had a "bold hand" and a "vigilant eye" and he could make nature speak and act out the "grand phenomena" for the visitors to the Royal Academy. The artist is raised in stature for the critics, just as the wild nature in this picture was elevated. Graham becomes merged with the view of nature he has painted, and it was claimed that he was "always deeply impressed and affected by the sentiment of nature", (52) although no evidence was given to suggest why, other than his ability to paint this popular landscape. Illustrated London News provided a reason for his success:

In every estimate of landscape art proper, those works claim highest consideration which not only represent the obvious aspects of external nature, but also suggest her latent meaning or affinities with our internal nature - that which appeals to man's moral feelings, and, in transmission through the perceptions and sensibilities of the artist-mind, acquire something of dramatic and poetic human sentiment.

(53)

There is still a notable absence of any explanation of the effect of the picture. Why "moral feelings" should be aroused by a turbulent stream, a broken bridge and a drover driving his cattle back from destruction is not clear. Only one (54) critic noticed the drama in the middle ground, and certainly the critic quoted above did not tie his "poetic human sentiment" to this part of the scene. It was the stream which dominated. The figure in the landscape only harmonised with the natural drama shown in the sky and the stream.

So far, all the notices contained praise for Graham's picture, but there was one criticism. An anonymous reviewer claimed to have been an eye-witness to a similar scene and therefore knew best how a river in spate should look.

We are aware that an effect of a long and rough journey upon a peat stained torrent is that its whole body becomes suffused by bubbles of air, specks of earthy matter and other impurities, so that, to a great extent, the lucidity of the fluid is destroyed, it, for the time of disturbance no longer retains its glossy onyx-like colour, and that in no small degree the power of its surface to reflect light is reduced; nevertheless, with this knowledge, and after making the allowance for the painter which is due to him as well as it, we are unable to persuade ourselves that the flood would lose so entirely as it appears to have done the qualities of a translucial and reflecting medium.

(55)

Such a criticism, so worded, seems terribly finicky, but it was a serious censure. It has been shown that the landscape artist was regarded by the reviewers to be both a part of and an interpreter

of nature. Therefore, if for any reason doubt is cast upon the integrity of the presentation of nature, a moral issue is raised. If, as the critic suggested, Graham was not present at the scene of his painting, for if he had been then he would have noticed that the spate was more of a "translucial and reflecting medium", then his painting must be a hoax which has falsely stirred the souls of the public. He then would be guilty of resorting to Jefferies' "stale old device". However, the criticism did not appear to halt the sale and popularity of Graham's picture.

It is not the attack on the painting which is important here, it is the fact that the detailed and eye-witness language employed in the condemnation is made impressive by the use of scientific language. The alternative view reads more like a naturalist's report than an observation on a painting. The power of this scientific slant when personally authenticated will be more fully revealed in the following chapters.

Isolation and Misanthropy. Picture 2

The Clearness After Rain by Henry Moore, exhibited in 1887.

Whereas Graham put most of the drama in his painting into the spate, but also allowed some dramatic consequences of this "rush of wild waters", Moore stripped his picture of incident. His is a seascape which shows little but the sea. He painted it very simply, very large and very blue. At first there is nothing but the sea, lapping from the foreground to a distant horizon. The eye strains for something to look at apart from the waves, just

Fig. 3:7



as if the spectator were in front of the sea, but only three sails can be discerned. That is all. The critics were pleased with Moore's "bold" representation of isolation:

There is nothing here save a couple of sails on the horizon to interfere with one's absolute enjoyment of the crisp blue waves dancing and gleaming in the light.

(56)

We find ourselves completely cut adrift from the land. We are in the freshness of the sea air, and amidst marine movement and colour; I might almost add that we have the smell of the sea in our nostrils. A lady who dreads that smell told me that Mr Moore's pictures render in her the first apprehensions of sea sickness - which is perhaps more of a compliment than a recommendation.

(57)

These extracts show that the critics delighted in Moore's presentation of isolation. The picture takes the viewer far away from city and man and that quality was the first to be appreciated. After paying tribute to their primary need from a seascape the critics then applied themselves to appreciating the quality of the painting:

The finest piece of sentiment and the truest representation of nature on these walls... [the firmament and the clouds] form a perfect harmony which is as full of expression as of beauty and dignity. The vastness and loneliness of the "waste of waters wide and deep" are emphasised by the few sails which, separated from each other by leagues of sea pass on the horizon.

(58)

As renderings... of the sea they are probably the most consummate studies yet done.

(59)

No one has hitherto so completely grasped the material qualities of the ocean as Henry Moore has translated them on to the canvas with such masterful 'bigness', such unerring skill.

(60)

For he sought for truth, and aimed at
rendering the truth without 'effect'
no piled up waves with a ship poised atop,
no liquid charm that idealises the summer
sea into a vapour. (61)

It can be seen that the language employed by the critics was again affected by the painting, as "harmony...dignity...vastness... ..bigness" show. One reviewer suffered from Warre-Cornish's linguistic problem over colour: "Here too a critic feels the poverty of language for the blue of Mr Henry Moore's is obviously compounded of a hundred hues." (62)

Moore's picture was also criticised because although it placed emphasis on isolation, and so was considered to have caught the essence of the sea, one critic, M.H.Spielman, (63) felt that the interpretation of nature had been neglected.

His best things have, to some extent, the look of studies, and lack, so far as form and composition go, the merit of intimate and yet non-obtrusive selection. (64)

Spielman's obituary of Moore in 1895 reviewed his whole work, and applied the terms "studies" and "naturalist" to the artist. He was congratulated for being "not merely in search of the picturesque" and his integrity admired. An anecdote revealed his love of truth since Moore, according to Spielmann, condemned himself for painting a dog in the foreground of one picture as a concession to the "popular desire for adventitious interest". For all that the obituary was customarily sympathetic and admiring,

Moore was accused of a "lack of imagination" for only producing that which his eye had witnessed. His presentation of isolation seemed too stark for Spielmann, who tried, rather halfheartedly, to turn this condemnation into praise "his science made itself felt, and defied criticism, or even argument". (65)

The element Spielmann missed in Moore's painting was sentiment and stressing Moore's "science"-reinforces the awareness that his picture lacked this antonym of science. To paint isolation so starkly was sufficient for the picture to impress, but not to endear.

Invisible Labourers: Picture 3

Spindrift by John MacWhirter, exhibited in 1876.

Spindrift is the fine spray from the sea which turns the air to mist. The picture presents a winter seascape in which two carts laden with sea weed are travelling aslant the canvas, toward the viewer, on a lane close to the sea. The cart in the forefront is drawn by a grey horse and the driver, who is walking, appears to be either sheltering behind the load or pushing from the back. The cart in the background is almost lost in the spindrift and the driver leads from the seaward side at the horse's head.

MacWhirter's picture caught the affections of the critics and the public because of the large grey horse in the forefront of his seascape. The critics could weave a moral from the presence of the horse which was more engaging to them than discussing the isolation in Clearness After Rain. Spindrift as its title

indicates, is a picture of nature, and is not an animal picture. However, it was the horse in the forefront which the critics observed, after first admiring the setting:

A dreary road by the sea, flogged with pelting rain, with which the spray blown by the wind from the crests of the waves blends in grey discomfort...

(66)

An atmosphere worthy almost of Turner's own feeling, and the sentiment of the conception of the old grey horse is truth itself. One is drawn in sympathy towards the dear old creature who 'with measured beat and slow' treads out his accustomed steps in the face of the driving wind.

(67)

The atmospheric effect of Mr MacWhirter's Spindrift is beyond praise. Notice too the straining attitude of the old white horse. Facing the rough and boisterous revelling of the wind, he, with an almost pathetic determination takes what steps he can, but without unnecessary ado. In short, truth and poetry are happily united in this picture.

(68)

The words "atmosphere" and "atmospheric" are the only ones the critics employed from the usual "aesthetic" vocabulary. The term "poetry" combined with "atmosphere" revives some of that special love of the morbid picturesque already seen, as does the misanthropy which completely omits the labourers from the view. No notice was taken of those in the picture, who also worked, like the horse, in the same weather, and with the same "almost pathetic determination". In Spindrift it is as if the horses pulled the carts without human guidance. Just as the drover and his cattle were virtually ignored in Spate, again because of the composition, in Spindrift the labourers were not noticed even though the reviewers were capable of appreciating the arduousness of the labour of the horse.



SPINDRIFT — J. MAC WHIRTER. A.R.A.

Pictures of Labourers: Idyll Picture 4

Girls Dancing or a Pastoral Symphony by George Mason,
exhibited in 1869.

Mason's painting shows two young girls dancing to the music of a boy piper. The boy, seated in the fork of a large tree, and the girls, together with sundry rural items (a dog, a crook, two sheaves of wheat and a scythe) all fill the foreground. The background is dominated by the hard line of the horizon which casts a darkness over the middle ground, somewhat obscuring the details of harvest in the valley between the tree and the sea.

The critics praised Mason's work for his ability to create a rural idyll. It was so generally accepted that Mason had carved out an original area in this field, they did not feel the need to spell out his achievement. Mason was referred to in passing in other reviews "Everybody can understand why we describe Mr Mason's landscapes as idealised..."⁽⁶⁹⁾ and "if we did not have the grace and sentiment of Mason..."⁽⁷⁰⁾ His standing is clearly shown by just such slight and casual references.

The quality of "grace" was found in Mason's use of subdued colours and the gracefulness of all the objects in his painting: birds, animals, trees and people. Mason was a self-taught artist and began painting in Italy. Most critics claimed that this Italian background was responsible for his dressing up the labourers in his English pictures. However, there is no suggestion that Mason was at fault to let Italianate rural labourers appear in English landscapes. Only one critic felt



3:30

that Girls Dancing was so Italian in feeling that it recalled "Spezzia, Naples and Amalfi" which led the reviewer to speculate on these "classical" qualities rather than upon the painting itself. (71) There was, however, no condemnation for these reminders of Italy in any of the reviews of Mason's work.

The praise for the idyll as an idyll was not entirely unanimous. The one dissenting voice felt that the paintings were realistic and praised Mason for his "loose social manner of painting" which represented to the anonymous writer⁽⁷²⁾ the "sound knowledge" of the artist. However, the idyll and the real do seem to merge into an "ideal founded on the possible and the actual" even though the "absence of expression" in the "rustics" "was not like everyday life".⁽⁷³⁾ It cannot be said therefore that the reviewer who did not see the idyll was entirely contradictory, for those who praised the idealism of the painting seemed to feel that reality was also involved.

Mason's work is important because of the use of the term "idyll" since it implies that another picture could have been painted. The critics seemed to know this and congratulated Mason for similarly knowing that an alternative less pleasing version of labourers existed. They preferred the idyll. Biographical evidence of Mason's own rural background assisted the writers and readers to feel confident in his choice of presentation. G.A. Simcox⁽⁷⁴⁾ quoting this evidence, showed Mason's "knowledge":

3:31

He was in those early days the champion of his village as a quarter-mile runner and jumper, boxer and wrestler and hunter and sportsman, and the hero of a sheep shearing and of a country fair. He can have no illusions about the English labourer nor about the English labourer's wife and daughter, he knew all about them, and all about the beer under the influence of which a whole district was wont to be subdued at festival time. When in after years his art treated these people with a respectful idealisation in which there was no conventionality, he probably worked rather in the delicate intention of turning the suggestion of goodness and beauty into facts than in a spirit of simulation.

(75)

To Simcox the idealised picture fitted in with the information that Mason "had no illusions". To make the two disparate facts fit (Mason's knowledge and Mason's idyll) "delicate intention" was required, according to Simcox, rather than evasion. Simcox too appeared to know that the rural inhabitants were drunk and immoral (as the pointed reference to the labourer's wife and daughter indicates) and assumed that his readers as well as Mason himself knew this too. Hence the praise for Mason who did not present the labourer as he 'really' was, but restrained from "delicacy" and "respect". It was not the labourer's feelings which were respected, however, but those of the readers of the quality journals. Mason presented idyllic labourers, not out of ignorance, but because of his knowledge. For the first time in these writings, an open awareness is apparent, that the idyllic presentation (and the averting of the eyes from the labourer) could be a choice.

The journalists responded to the picture in a language which adjusted itself to the "poetry". Here is a Keatsian example:





Mr Mason's work is in his intense feeling for low toned harmonies of subtle colour - in the 'air' of grace which pervades all parts of his picture. This is distinct in the figure of him who, resting at the tree on the left, breathes old world melodies on his pipe, and pours out his soul at ease, - in that vigorous dancer who springs before us with moving robes - in those of the more subdued companions, in the lines of the landscape and the halcyon grey of the dimmed sky which overhangs all, like peace itself.

(76)

The key words used to describe Mason's work were "tender.... graceful....intuitive....harmony", words which suggest a longing for a Keatsian Romantic beauty. (77) Mason's ability to create such images prompted the admiration of his contemporaries:

perceiving beautiful relations of physical dignity and pathos where the suggestion of them is hidden from duller sense.

His art is one which blends landscape, figure and animal design intuitively, poetically and almost inseparably.

with him style means nature and nature style.

(78)

The elite sensibility required to produce and perceive the idyll is apparent in the first quotation. The key word "intuitive" appears again in the second, while the third fine phrase is another rendering of Keats, suggesting "truth beauty and beauty truth".

Pictures of Labourers: Genre. Picture 5

Waiting for the Verdict by Abraham Solomon exhibited in 1857 and Not Guilty by Abraham Solomon exhibited in 1859.

Waiting for the Verdict depicts its title. A family group comprising three generations wait outside the court room for a

3:33

verdict, which, judging by their sad and anxious expressions, must affect them dramatically. In the background the courtroom door is open and lawyers are leaving the court, filing into their antechamber, presumably to bring the verdict to the unhappy family. Not Guilty again illustrates its title. The son is returned to the bosom of the same family and their joy is manifest. The background shows the open door of the antechamber leading out to the sunshine.

Although the titles are not specifically rural there is evidence in the picture to point to the country origins of the figures. The father's clothes and boots for instance, the presence of the collie dog and the fading flowers which decorate the child's discarded hat, all add up to the feeling that these are rural figures. Certainly contemporary comment assumed that the family was rural. I consider that Solomon intended these pointers to help the viewer find the moral truth in the picture. The connotations of rural innocence help induce the reader's sense of suspense. The painting is of a man unjustly accused and about to be condemned; not that of a family who are ashamed of their ne'er-do-well son.

John Trot (79) writing in Punch on the Royal Academy, was impressed by the picture and gave it four lines in his doggerel dialect review:

A pictur o' the 'sizes did also take my mind,
The jury a consider'n their verdict for to find,
The pris'ner's poor old veather, his mother and his wife,
He beun, as I took it, on trial vor his life.

(80)

3:34

I do not know whether the rural dialect was inspired by the painting or not. As far as I can tell, John Trot and his particularly rural presentation was not a regular feature of Punch. But that journal delighted in the use of the agricultural labourer as a means to satirise artists, as the cartoons in Figs. 4 and 5 show. Certainly John Trot felt that the picture showed the distress of the family for the fate of an innocent accused, rather than for a guilty son exposed. The companion picture, Not Guilty, painted two years later, confirmed this judgement.

Athenaeum compared Verdict with Crabbe, thus keeping up the connections of rural life and crime, although the anonymous critic in that journal also stated that Crabbe "could have painted in words [a] much more refined picture". This journalist also singled out the father as a "countryman" but was too much affected by Solomon to write a critique, instead the review was taken up by a leap into the picture, rather than an observation of it:

The careless barristers pass in and out, the
door opens and shuts, soon will come a lull,
and then the awful judgement words breaking
upon the hush.

(81)

A later review in Athenaeum noticed Solomon's companion picture Not Guilty and used the word "honest" twice to describe it. It may be that this use is merely an association picked up from the subject of the painting, but it was also a stock adjective used to describe the rural labourer. Other synonyms for "honest"

**THE SKETCHING SEASON.**

Appreciative Rustic. "THERE! IF I COULD 'MAP' LIKE THAT THERE, I'D CHUCK UP EVERYTHINK!"



BOS WANTS EPHIPPIA.

Rustic. "AH, I WISH I COULD DO THAT THERE, SIR!"

Artist (who has been Sketching all day in the Sun). "DO YOU? WHY?"

Rustic. "WELL, SIR, I BE MAIN TIRED O' HARD WORK!!"

3:35

were also employed: "Quite as pure-hearted and robust and happier and more cheerful in its subject..." (82) The critic then commented on the figures:

The figures are a little overfed and the grandfather is a trifle like Daddy Hardacres but these are small drawbacks to a clever, honest and pathetic picture that goes straight to the heart.

(83)

I think the term "overfed" implies that the models have offended the critic's eye, but not because they lack realism, which would suggest that the figures should be more angular and ugly. It is rather a desire for the graceful figures of Mason which is present in this mild criticism of Solomon's models. Despite Solomon's intention and the fact that some critics drew upon their cultural assumptions concerning rural innocence in order to understand the painting, The Times failed to read this element and found Verdict "objectionable" because there was not enough of a pointer to the man's innocence. The reviewer had not ignored the rural ethos of the figures, for they were referred to as a "peasant family" but this knowledge was not enough to convince the writer of the son's innocence. The power of suspense took away that comfort and the writer wished to feel that the anxiety induced by the painting was justified by being roused for an innocent man. (84)

There is no antagonism toward the rural characters in Solomon's paintings found in these reviews, and no suggestion that drunkenness and immorality might make them unworthy of sympathy.

It can be seen that genre paintings were reviewed in a more personal way than landscapes but this is more a matter of greater identification with the picture, and is not sufficient to account for the discrepancy between the reception of Solomon's figures and Mason's.

Pictures of Labourers : Fishermen. Picture 7

Hearts of Oak by James Hook, exhibited in 1875

Hook's painting shows a seascape with a family in the foreground. The father is making a boat for his son while the mother nurses a younger child. All are absorbed in the making of the toy and their backs are to the sea. The seashore is rocky and one large perpendicular rock dominates the middle ground.

The critics responded with enthusiasm to this picture and wrote phrases praising "English hearts and eyes".⁽⁸⁵⁾ They were pleased with the picture of family life shown.⁽⁸⁶⁾ There was no condemnation of the fisherman or his wife and children. More than being praised the picture was considered to be a tonic to "townsman":

Are there not hosts of townsman jaded of eye,
or ear, and of spirit who have stood before
Hook's pictures and seemed to hear the far off
sea grow louder day by day and thanked him for
such provisions of the sunlight and the coast?

(87)

One reviewer chose to give an insight into the kind of response to nature this pictorial fishing family might have. Following the genre review practice, the writer imaginatively entered the world depicted and took on their supposed emotions. This extract shows how far a journey he or she took into this simple picture.

Fig. 3:12



Nature is, to them, a hard task mistress and her hand lies heavily upon them. They cannot escape from her, and she shows them no mercy. They respect nature for her strength, they fear her, perhaps, for her stern ascent of her over-powering authority, but they are never afraid of meeting her face to face and what advantages they can wrest from her in the strife they seize on without hesitation.

(88)

There is obviously no sense that another view of the fishermen might exist, and nothing intrudes into this patriotic and brave image.

Hook is described as an artist who studies "Nature with a closeness, and pourtray (sic) her beauties with a personal sincerity of conviction".⁽⁸⁹⁾ The same critic, coupled Hook with Moore, because they both showed sincerity. The sea is the link between Hook and Moore, but that is not enough to bridge the great gap between Moore's isolated and Hook's figure dominated paintings. The critic did not feel this difference, being far more impressed with the artist's personal "sincerity" than with the actual subject matter of the paintings.

.....oOo.....

It is the critics' response to Mason's painting which is the most important in this analysis of the reviews of these popular paintings. His ability to transmute rural figures was such that the figure blind "aesthetic" view could not only see them, but admire them. It is not a question with Girls Dancing as with Spindrifft or Spate, that the figures were so much a part of the objects harmoniously displayed that they were not seen. The rural figures in Mason's painting step forward, even if in

borrowed clothes, taken, so the critics said, from Italy, but more in fact from literary fancy. Such dressing up was praised as an insight. "He understands the subtle gestures of the simple, the grace of dumb things and children".⁽⁹⁰⁾

The shore is full of sweet and skilful
incident we know not what harmony of
elevated romance with natural pastoral
in it all, as the boy shepherd pipes on
among the stems that branch between the
sea and us, his wallet slung from a twig;
his crook leaning by him, his dog doing
his part well towards enriching and
completing the picture.

(91)

A close look at the painting reveals that the "sweet and skilful incident" by the shore is in fact haymaking, but the writer did not intend bathos. The detail in the foreground caused a confused state of mind so that it was not known what to make of it all except an "elevated romance" in which "simple...grace....dumb" seem words used to describe the rural inhabitants as well as trees and dogs. Only Simcox had a criticism of the painting:

It is thankless to wish for more, and yet lovely though it is, one fancies that the loveliness is empty. After all they are only children and they are only dancing, that is not a reflection that strikes us in looking at Greek or Venetian work of a similar character, but after all English peasant nature is not deep enough, at all events, not rich enough or bright enough when we take it at its ordinary level to make the mere joy of living a wonder and a mystery.

(92)

We have already seen the fastidious element in the aesthetic view in relation to figures. It should not therefore be a surprise to discover that the reviewers of this picture shared that dislike of figures. What is surprising is the aggression shown. Simcox

3:39

is derogatory about the inadequacy of the "English peasantry" as objects worthy of fine art. A. Meynall⁽⁹³⁾ writing in Art Journal in 1883 declared that the labourer "has no costume" and the "rustic of England must be the most unpaintable countryman in the world". She congratulated Mason for pretending this was not so.

It is not easy indeed to imagine how otherwise the English agriculturalist and his wife and daughter are to be treated at all... in beautiful art only with the help of make believe. We need not pretend that he wears a coloured sash, or any improbability of that sort; but we must pretend that his shoulders are broader, his flanks lighter than the actual average; we must frankly affect to think that the village girl has discarded the pink or primrose coloured sunbonnet.

(94)

Simcox and Maynell were not alone in their condemnation. Other painters and critics agreed. Marcus Stone⁽⁹⁵⁾ for instance, a painter of "pretty pictures"⁽⁹⁶⁾ lamented that he was not French for then he could have painted the "peasant life of the moment" which he considered to be "exceedingly picturesque". But being English and there being "no typical peasant life in England, and no typical peasant dress.... that was impossible".⁽⁹⁷⁾ Stone was also congratulated on his pictures of men and women in gardens, wearing 18th century costume, because "nothing of nature's literalness is allowed to obtrude within the precincts of the enchanted garden wherein the beings he represents pass their quiet lives". When a painter did avoid the pretty and sentimental idyll, he was attacked. Haytime by T. Armstrong was exhibited at the same time as Girls Dancing and the reviewer in Art Journal in 1869 innocently wondered at the ugliness of his figures: "When and where did these long and

lanky women live? Why did nature make them so defiant in angularity and ugliness?"⁽⁹⁸⁾ Maynell also thought the "Betty"⁽⁹⁹⁾ of real life had ceased to "toss a handful of field flowers into her milking pail"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ as well as discarding picturesque clothing. The prevailing image of the labourer held by Mason's critics, as opposed to the image employed by Mason, was one of ugliness of dress, form and habit.

The aggression is surprising, the more so because it appears misplaced. Girls Dancing does not show agricultural labourers, but young girls. No adults are present in the painting in any detail.

There is a difference between reviews which immediately followed the exhibition of the painting, and later reviews. It is the lengthy journal articles in the 1870s and 1880s which contain the antagonism to the labourer and praise the artist for protecting the viewer from an unidyllic presentation.

The intruding element in the reviews of the 1880s ("knowledge") relates directly to the journals' concurrent interest in agricultural unrest. Solomon's pictures were too early to be affected, as was Mason's when first exhibited. Hook was reviewed right in the middle of the coverage of the labourer, but fishermen escaped censure because the journals contained no alternative view of them. The awareness of another, unpleasant,

alternative, is shown in indirect ways as well as the open aggression already shown. In 1872, for instance, the review in Art Journal was ironic at the expense of the labourers:

"The piece claims notice on the score of its gradations, but in parts the background supercedes the figures, and that is an agrarian outrage that cannot be condoned." (101)

.....oOo.....

The peculiar response to Mason's picture is a revelation of the antagonism of the aesthetic view to any interruption of the "harmony" of the landscape they saw. It is not simply that the labourers dressed in an unpicturesque manner, they were known within the journals to be behaving politically, therefore unpicturesquely. This activity marred the beauty of the landscape. The "aesthetic" view here becomes politically active itself, despite all the evasions of language, and the politics displayed were strongly Conservative.

It should now be clear how important it is to analyse the workings of the languages employed by reviewers and critics in order to reveal the cultural assumptions of the time concerning nature and those who worked in nature. Although a change in stance toward the figure in the landscape is revealed, that change was not accompanied by a complete change in the language form. Rather, the misanthropic element which first denied all figures beauty, turned against the figure of the labourer in particular. One key factor of this chapter is the alternative view of nature first employed by Warre-Cornish and Jefferies. When this form is picked up in the review of Spate, the presence of a scientific vocabulary to strengthen it

is also important. Another factor is the figure blindness of the "aesthetic" view and the way in which that view could turn into a strong Conservative position when the figure was noticed. These elements together with the dominance of personal authentication, as well as identification, in all these writings, will be seen again in the chapters which follow. It cannot be stressed enough how widespread and important such factors were in the writings for a leisure interest in nature.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Three

- (1) Claydon, P.W. "The Relation of Art to Nature" Cornhill Jul. 1866 p. 28
For an elaboration of this point see also Batten, J. From the Eccentric to the Essential Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 1969, where Hardy's knowledge, and use, of art references are traced.
- (2) F. Warre-Cornish (1839-1916) teacher and musician. He contributed to Edinburgh, Macmillans, Fortnightly and 19th Century in addition to Cornhill.
- (3) Warre-Cornish, F. "Thoughts of a Country Critic" Cornhill Dec. 1874 p. 717
- (4) Henry Blackburn (1830-1897) art critic. He contributed to National and 19th Century.
- (5) Blackburn, H. "English Art in 1883" National Sep. 1883 p. 59
- (6) The illustrator, Marcus Stone RA, illustrated a number of Dickens' novels including Our Mutual Friend, Bleak House and Little Dorrit. He was a popular artist and his contributions to the Royal Academy were highly praised.
- (7) Claydon, op.cit. p. 29 and p. 35
- (8) ibid. p. 36
- (9) c.f. Newell, Rev. E.J. "Mans love for Nature" Macmillans Aug. 1899 pp. 300-6 and Colvin, Sir S. "English Painters and Painting in 1867" Fortnightly Oct. 1867 pp. 464-467
- (10) Barthes, R. Mythologies London 1973
c.f. "The Blue Guide" pp. 774-78 where the 19th century love of mountains is neatly analysed.
- (11) Colvin. op.cit. p. 470
- (12) It is interesting to note that photographs were not seen as 'natural' even though they were taken by the sun.
- (13) Lewis Garrol encapsulates the difficulty of merging art with photography, as the following stanza from Hiaiwatha's Photographing illustrates. Needless to say, the picture ended in "an utter failure".

(13) continued

Next the son, the Stunning-Cantab:
He suggested curves of beauty,
Curves pervading all his figure,
Which the eye might follow onward,
Till they centred in the breast pin,
Centred in the golden breast pin.
He had learnt it all from Ruskin
(Author of 'The Stones of Venice',
'Seven Lamps of Architecture'
'Modern Painters' and some others).

(14) Anon. "The Royal Academy V Landscapes, Sea pieces and Animal Paintings" Art Journal Jun. 1 1866 p. 170

(15) Warre-Cornish, op.cit. p. 719

(16) ibid. pp. 719-720

(17) ibid. p. 720

(18) ibid. p. 720

(19) Richard Jefferies is discussed in Chapter Nine.

(20) c.f. Chapter Two where Chambers marginal position in relation to the "quality" journals is discussed.

(21) This is not simply a linguistic device designed to create immediacy. Biographical evidence reveals that Jefferies did walk in the fields each day. He also had a regular column in Chambers for a short period.

(22) Jefferies, op.cit. p. 120

(23) Wilkie Collins' description of Miss Milroyd's cottage in Armada (serialised in Cornhill in 1865) was also approached by an equally hackneyed "rustic bridge", as Collins makes clear: "Description of it is needless; the civilised universe knows it already; it was the typical cottage of the drawing master's early lessons in neat shading and the broad pencil touch - with the trim thatch, the luxuriant creepers, the modest lattice-windows, the rustic porch and the wicker birdcage, all complete". Cornhill Mar. 1865 p. 275

(24) Wrights, D. ed The Penguin Book of English Romantic Verse London 1975. Wright considered that autumn was the favoured season for the Romantics and cites evidence from Shelley and Keats. c.f. Introduction p. xv. It would be more usual to think that trees are in the "fullness" of beauty in midsummer.

- (25) William Rathbone Greg (1809-1881) was originally in 'trade' but he failed to keep his father's mills in business. After he wrote Creed of Christendom in 1851 which was admired by John Morley, an editor of Fortnightly, he was accepted as part of the "magic circle". He was best known as a political writer and a social scientist. National accepted his attitude toward the working classes as illustrative of their Conservative stance.
- (26) Greg, op.cit. p. 692
- (27) ibid. p. 693
- (28) ibid. p. 694
- (29) Hamerton, P.G. (1843-1894) was editor of Portfolio from 1870 til 1894. He also wrote for Fortnightly, Contemporary, Cornhill and Macmillans.
- (30) Hamerton, op.cit. p. 208
- (31) Its rural location is not actually described, except in the use of the word "valley" but the details are rural.
- (32) Hamerton, op.cit. p. 209
- (33) ibid. p. 209
- (34) ibid. p. 208
- (35) John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) was a consumptive, hence is short life. He was forced by his health to live abroad and developed an interest in and considerable reputation for Renaissance art. Sketches in Italy and Greece 1879 brought him to the "magic circle" and thereafter he contributed regularly to the journals on art subjects. He had a private income and donated his earnings from journalism to charity.
- (36) It is a considerable surprise to find so few references to Ruskin in the art journals and the art reviews. Symonds is unusual in his acknowledgement of the influence of Ruskin upon the taste for landscape art.
- (37) Symonds, op.cit. p. 281
- (38) ibid. p. 281
- (39) ibid. p. 282
- (40) ibid. p. 283
- (41) ibid. pp. 283-4
- (42) ibid. p. 284
- (43) The readers of other journals perhaps?

- (44) Drew, J. (Director of Exhibitions) and Harrison, M. (Exhibition Organiser) Exhibition Catalogue preface Great Victorian Paintings - their paths to fame London 1978 p.5.
- (45) Anon. "Exhibition of the Royal Academy" Illustrated London News (ILN) May 26 1866 p. 518
- (46) Anon. "Fine Arts Royal Exhibition" Athenaeum Jun 2 1866 p. 742
- (47) Fenn, W.W. "Our Living Artists: P. Graham R.A." Magazine of Art 1879. p. 144
- (48) Anon. "Exhibition of the Royal Academy" The Times Jun. 12 1866 p. 6
- (49) Anon, ILN, 1866, op.cit. p. 518
- (50) Anon. "The Royal Academy" Art Journal Jun. 1 1866 pp. 170-171
- (51) Atkinson, J.B. "Art, Politics and Proceedings" Blackwoods Aug. 1866 p. 193
- (52) The language of the anonymous critic for The Times was so affected by the picture that the term "brae" was felt necessary for "spate".
- (53) Anon, ILN, 1866, op.cit. p. 518
- (54) The anonymous critic for The Times.
- (55) Anon, Athenaeum, 1866, op.cit. p. 742
- (56) Anon. "The Royal Academy Exhibition Gallery VIII" Art Journal Sep. 1887 p. 278
- (57) This reviewer is P.G. Hamerton, writing in his own journal. "A Modern Marine Painter" Portfolio Apr. 1890 p. 88
- (58) Anon. "Fine Arts, The Royal Academy, 4th Notice" Athenaeum Jun. 11 1887 p. 773
- (59) Anon. "Fine Art at the Paris Exhibition" Portfolio Sep. 1889 p. 174
- (60) Spielmann, M.H. "In Memoriam: Henry Moore R.A." Magazine of Art 1895 p. 378
- (61) ibid. p. 378
- (62) Hamerton, Portfolio, 1890, op.cit. p. 88
- (63) Marion Henry Alexander Spielman (1859-1948) a writer on art. He also wrote for New Review (New), National, 19th Century and Contemporary.
- (64) Spielman, op.cit. p. 378

- (65) ibid. p. 378
- (66) Anon. The Times May 31 1876 p. 5
- (67) Carey, C.W. "The Holloway Collection Part 2" Art Journal Jul. 1897 pp. 202-3
- (68) Anon. "The Royal Academy Concluding Notice" Art Journal Sep. 1876 p. 271
- (69) Anon, The Times, 1866, op.cit. p. 12
- (70) Blackburn, 1883, op.cit. p. 52
- (71) Anon. "The Royal Academy, The 101st Exhibition Second Notice" Art Journal Jul. 1 1868 p. 199
- (72) Anon. "The Royal Academy The 104th Exhibition" Art Journal Jun. 1 1872 p. 151
- (73) White, J.F. "Pictures of the Late George Mason A.R.A." Contemporary Apr. 1873 p. 728
- (74) George Augustus Simcox (1841-1905) was also a journalist for Cornhill, North British Review (North British), Macmillans, Fortnightly, Frasers, National and 19th Century.
- (75) Simcox, G.A. "Mr Mason's Collected Works" Portfolio Mar. 1873 p. 43
- (76) Anon. "Fine Arts, Mr George Mason R.A." Athenaeum May 1 1869 pp. 610-11
- (77) This comes from the phrases "breathes old world melodies" (from Grecian Urn) and "pours out his soul at ease" (from Nightingale). They are not quotations but paraphrases, for the latter should be "pouring forth thy soul abroad/In such an ecstasy" from Nightingale.
- (78) Colvin, S. "English Artists of the Present Day: XXVII George Mason R.A." Portfolio Jul. 1871 p. 115
- (79) John Trot as used here is another term for "Hodge".
- (80) Anon. "John Trot at the Royal Academy" Punch May 16 1857 p. 200
- (81) Anon. "Fine Arts, The Royal Academy" Athenaeum May 16 1857 p. 633
- (82) Anon. "Review of the Royal Academy" Athenaeum Apr. 30. 1859 p. 586
- (83) ibid. p. 586. I very much regret not being able to trace a meaning for the name Daddy Hardacres. I assume he was a comic character from music hall or melodrama.

- (84) It is suggested in the Arts Council Catalogue that Solomon painted the Companion picture in response to objections in The Times and Critic concerning the suspense in the picture. I did not find any other reference to the connection between these journalists' observations and the appearance of Not Guilty.
- (85) Anon. "Review" The Times May 1 1875 p. 12
- (86) Ruskin objected to the inconsistency of the light and dark qualities of the objects and their shadows. Ruskin, Works, XIV p. 281 cited in Arts Council Catalogue, op.cit. p. 45
- (87) Stephen, F.G. "James Clark Hook R.A." Art Annual Christmas 1888 p. 1
- (88) Anon. "Review of the R.A." Art Journal Jul. 1897 p.219
- (89) a Armstrong, W. "The Art Harvest of the Year" National Jul. 1884 p. 675
- (90) Colvin, op.cit. p. 113
- (91) ibid. p. 117
- (92) Simcox, op.cit. pp. 42-3
- (93) Alice Christiana Gertrude (Thompson) Meynell (1847-1922) poet and journalist. Close friend of Coventry Patmore, George Meredith and France Thompson.
- (94) Meynell, A.C.G. "George Mason, A Biographical Study" Chapter III "Work in England" Art Journal Jul. 1883 p. 186
- (95) Marcus Stone R.A. see Fig. 3:1 for an example of his work.
- (96) Anon. "The Chronicle of Art Review" Magazine of Art Mar. 1889 p. xxiv
- (97) Anon. "Art Review" Strand Magazine Aug. 1899 p. 219
- (98) Anon. "Review of the 101st Royal Academy Exhibition" Art Journal Jul. 1869 p. 198
- (99) Betty was a stock name used for female agricultural labourers in the same way as "Hodge" was used for the male. It was also used for female domestic servants. Meynell, op.cit. p. 186
- (100) Such a reference must be mythical. Hardy's Tess for instance contains no reference to such an activity at Talbothays. Meynell, op.cit. p. 186
- (101) Anon, Art Journal Jun. 1 1872 p. 151 op.cit.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Scientific View of Nature

The Labourer as part of the Flora and Fauna

This chapter analyses the scientific interest in nature as it appeared in the "quality" journals between 1859 and 1900. Natural science articles were written up in the journals in a popular form and they, together with contributions from self-styled naturalists, field naturalists and nature rambles, made up the second major area of leisure interests in nature.

The popular scientific articles were the most erudite of all the articles on natural science. Tracts and treatises on astronomy, geology, ornithology, botany, marine biology etc, were presented in these articles in a neutral tone, written in the third person. The writers offered a learned and instructive article which was specialised, but 'lay' enough for the non-specialised journals.

In comparison, naturalists' articles were more accessible to the general reader. Naturalist articles introduced botany or ornithology, antiquarianism or philology to the reader in a light and personal manner. Their style was easy and the writer addressed the reader direct, in the first person. These articles contained detailed observations of birds, trees and flowers. Natural science to the naturalist was not a study, but a hobby.

The journalists who were, or called themselves, naturalists, also presented articles as nature rambles. These articles took an

intimate tone with the reader who was invited to accompany the writer on a walk in nature. Ostensibly an interest in natural science would be cultivated during the walk, but the form was too discursive and anecdotal to be over-didactic.

Obviously the scientist, naturalist and nature Rambler all collected from nature, often physically by removing fossils, plants, birds' eggs, butterflies, marine animals etc.; taking them away from their natural habitat to be displayed in cases, greenhouses or aquariums in their city homes.⁽¹⁾ However, physical collecting did not play a prominent part in the articles aimed at these readers. Few instructions were given, amongst the many instructions to the reader, which directly concerned their collections. Indeed, the naturalist articles were characterised by a revulsion from such an activity. Nevertheless, all the writings which shared scientific interests in nature held the assumption that the serious natural scientist reader would be a collector, if not physically, then mentally. Such an assumption is shown in the detailed descriptions and anecdotes which display a 'mental' collection, as opposed to the physical. The writers' own contemporary notebooks offer corroboration of this point. Jefferies, for example, also paused to make sketches in his notebooks.⁽²⁾ In the late 19th century, photographs could replace these sketches.⁽³⁾ There were other collectors from nature, but these were not collecting flora and fauna but instead collected from the labourers. They recorded, with varying degrees of scientific skill, folk lore, dialect, folk dances, superstitions etc. and collated their findings in glossaries and dictionaries.

The presence of this new material in the 1880s-1900 period had considerable impact upon the writings of the field naturalists and the nature rambles in the "quality" journals.

The way in which the various kinds of articles on natural science were distributed over the time span reflects the journals' struggle for economic survival. For example, popular science articles predominated from 1859 until the early 1880s, when the increased demand for shorter and more easily digested pieces of information led to their curtailment. The articles by field naturalists and nature rambles were however present all through the time span of the journals, as their looser style lent itself more readily to increased popularisation. Collectors did not begin to show their influence on journal writings until the 1880s, the time when the popular science articles were being phased out of the non-specialised market. In effect, the collecting interest in the labourer replaced the only serious scientific articles in the quality journals.

Popular Science

The rejection of factual recordings as an inadequate representation of nature shown in Chapter 3 indicates that science was considered by the "aesthetics" to be something of a poor relation to art. However writings on science in both the specialised and non-specialised journals did show that their view was open to criticism. For example, in an article in Anthropological Review called "Art in Relation to Comparative Anthropology"⁽⁴⁾ an anonymous writer criticised Holman Hunt for his presentation of Christ in Christ Disputing with the Doctors⁽⁵⁾ and wrote in a learned and

lengthy manner on anatomy, physiognomy, and racial characteristics. These scientific facts together presented a damning case against Hunt.⁽⁶⁾ J. Hinton,⁽⁷⁾ writing in Cornhill "Seeing with Eyes Shut" also stated that looking with the eyes and therefore with the senses, was not a good method for reaching the truth in nature. Hinton advocated the scientific view and cited astronomy and Newton to demonstrate his claim. "Science bids us" he asserted, to see truly, not faultily through our eyes, but with our intellect and instinct. These were our real senses he felt, for then "the flat earth round(s) itself into a sphere".⁽⁸⁾ His article eulogised the scientific view of nature:

No-where, not among the most extravagant romancers or spasmodic poets, is the effect of looking with the eyes closed so evident as in the scientific interpretation of nature.... The general view of nature which is presented by Science, is as unlike the impression we receive by our senses as can well be conceived.

(9)

There is a difference in tone between Hinton and the anonymous writer for Anthropological. Although both writers were interested in science, they presented their articles to different readers. Hinton gave Cornhill readers a general introduction to science. The anonymous writer assumed Anthropological readers would understand an argument based on a knowledge of specific sciences.

An awareness of the "aesthetic" view of nature as an alternative was not only shown in articles based primarily on attack and defence.

G.H. Lewes,⁽¹⁰⁾ although a Darwinist, tried to compromise. When asked by Thackeray⁽¹¹⁾ to present six articles in the first six editions of Cornhill, he employed a quotation from Wordsworth⁽¹²⁾ to head them and a lyrical tone to open his series "Studies in Animal Life". Although by the sixth article in the series the quotation still remained, the opening to that article matched the content. Cornhill sold extravagantly well in its first year, which was perhaps an influence on Lewes and Thackeray, but whatever reason led to the disappearance of the abrupt change in tone between the opening and the rest of the writing is not as important as the sense that the reader needed easing in to the articles. The first number soon settled to dissections and diagrams, but its opening was positively gushing: "Come with me, and lovingly study nature, as she breathes, palpitates and works under myriad forms of life...."⁽¹³⁾ The second article, actually about pond life, also opened in a similar vein:

The day is bright with a late autumn sun;
the sky is clear with a keen autumn wind,
which lashes our blood into a canter as we
press against it, and the cantering blood
sets the thoughts into hurrying excitement.

(14)

The aesthetic view of nature is quite prominent in these enthusiastic openings, but the third article came even closer when Lewes described an old wall in his first paragraph. It is quite a sharp jolt when the reader discovers that the subject of the article is microscopic life and not the beauties of decay. By the time Lewes reached the fourth article he employed an anecdote to ease in the reader, and repeated this formula for the fifth. In the final article Lewes discarded his literary gestures toward the aesthetic view altogether.



The suggestion that an editor might ask a scientific writer to dress up the opening of his articles in order to protect readers, calls into question the definition of popular science. A "serious" specialised journal such as Anthropological might present a "popular" science article on art, but it would be a rarity. The readers of the specialised scientific journals⁽¹⁵⁾ were usually members of an institution⁽¹⁶⁾ which had especially formed because of a declared interest in and appetite for a particular branch of natural science. The titles of their articles indicate this interest: "On Intelligence and its Relation to Instinct"⁽¹⁷⁾ and "On the Primitive Form of the Human Skull"⁽¹⁸⁾ for example both appeared in one issue of Anthropological. Although a "quality" journal such as Fortnightly might risk such titles the content would not be presented in specialised language. The average quality journal preferred "Comets"⁽¹⁹⁾ which were of course topical⁽²⁰⁾ in both title and content for popular science articles. St Pauls offered the most popular example in "The Misfortunes of a Geologist"⁽²¹⁾ while "The Rationale of Mythology"⁽²²⁾ and "On the Aims and Instruments of Scientific Thought"⁽²³⁾ show that journalists who were not themselves scientists, were capable of both commentary on the fashionable interest in science⁽²⁴⁾ and of carrying over some of its methods to apply to other interests.

Edinburgh maintained its usual style of presentation for all subjects including science, and would not alter for fashionable taste nor economic need. "Spectrum Analysis" appeared in 1880 carrying, as did all other articles, its book list at the beginning which showed the basis of the article:

Spectrum Analysis, 6 lectures delivered in 1868 by Henry E. Roscoe FRS 8v London 1869.

Researches in Spectrum Analysis in Connection with the Spectrum of the Sun by J. Norman Lockyer FRS "Proceedings of the Royal Society" Vol. XXVIII 1879.

On the Spectra of Some of the Fixed Stars by William Huggins FRAS and W.A. Miller MD LL.D. "Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society" Vol. cliv 1864.

Further investigations of the Spectra of some of the Stars and Nebulae, with an attempt to determine therefrom whether these Bodies are moving towards or from the Earth by William Huggins FRS "Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society" Vol. clviii 1868.

The Universe of Stars by Richard A. Proctor, 2nd edition, London 1878.

The Transit of Venus across the Sun. A translation of the celebrated Discourse thereupon by the Rev. Jeremiah Horrox to which is prefixed a Memoir of his Life and Labours by Rev. Arundell Blount Whatton BA LLB, London 1859.

The Mind in the Lower Animals in Health and Disease by W. Lander Lindsay MD RSDE FLS, London 1879.

(25)

The list illustrates something of the extent of the lectures and writings on astronomy and the taste for scientific lectures and societies in the 1860s and '70s. It also includes, in a very respectable list of highly qualified scientific writers, a professional journalist of popular science who wrote for the non-specialised journals: Richard Proctor, whose career and quality is so representative that he merits a more detailed treatment.

Richard Proctor⁽²⁶⁾

So far as can be ascertained, Proctor wrote 161⁽²⁷⁾ articles in eight⁽²⁸⁾ journals between 1863 and 1886. Further research would certainly produce more evidence of his prolific output of

articles. Proctor lacked formal qualifications or membership of a scientific society as can be seen in his citation in Edinburgh. This lack led Trollope⁽²⁹⁾ to ask for proof of his knowledge of popular science before he would accept his work for St. Pauls in 1869. Thackeray had already published in Cornhill a number of articles by Proctor, but this it would seem was not proof enough. The fact that Trollope felt unable to judge unaided demonstrates the learned form of the popular science articles, for Proctor's specialisation was beyond Trollope's range of knowledge. However, Trollope was convinced, and once launched via these two important journals, Proctor was able to secure regular placements in all the major journals without again, as far as can be known, ever having to prove his knowledge other than by pointing to his publications in the "quality" journals.

Proctor, for all he wrote so rapidly and published so often (an article practically every two months or more) claimed that he found the work uncongenial:

It will give an idea of the difficulty with which I then wrote on scientific matters for popular reading, to state that I was engaged more than six weeks over that short article of nine pages.... I had no particular taste for it, as my slow progress.... had shown.

(30)

He was forced into journalism after losing all his money in the collapse of the New Zealand Banking Corporation.⁽³¹⁾ He knew that scientific research at that time was "not remunerative"⁽³²⁾ and initially had no idea whether he could earn a living for himself

and his family from journalism. His list of at least 161 articles, and the 14 books⁽³³⁾ made up from them, point to his ability to develop the talent of turning science into popular reading and thereby to earn a living. This ability led to his own monthly journal Knowledge. It was a financially successful venture, as its reasonably long life indicates⁽³⁴⁾ although it was unable to survive as a weekly in its early period. After Proctor had entered the "magic circle" as an editor he was asked to write for several journals at once. He remained with his first, Cornhill, for the entire span of his career, and was their only contributor on popular science, but he also contributed within that time to most of Cornhill's competitors. The extent of his acceptance, by competing journals, is a good indicator of the interest taken in popular science during the 1860s and '70s.

Proctor's style eschewed window dressing, or any recognition of the aesthetic view of nature. It is also hardly surprising, given his output that he was sometimes guilty of revamping material. He always presented the reader with a rather long article which was entirely factual. A representative example is "Notes on Flying and Flying Machines"⁽³⁵⁾ where there are no digressions or pauses for anecdotes but simply an exposition of the methods employed by man for flight as far as he knew. He produced ideas, not speculations, for flying structures, and these were carefully based on evidence and observation of bird and insect life as well as of anatomy. His writing in this article demanded a knowledge of mathematics and physics, perhaps a little more than would be expected of readers, but not enough to make his writings too specialised.

However, Proctor wrote two articles which were very different to all his journal writings. They could almost be called science-fiction, if it were not for Proctor's style being so opposed to fiction and fancy. "A Voyage to the Sun"⁽³⁶⁾ and "A Voyage to the Ringed Planet"⁽³⁷⁾ were written in exactly the same style as his others, being again ideas firmly based on current knowledge. His descriptions of the planets and stars seen on the journeys to Saturn and the Sun were based on facts discoverable from astronomical research. He made no attempt to describe the flying machines, or to produce any sense of movement. In fact, he did not employ any literary affects at all. Wells⁽³⁸⁾ and Jefferies⁽³⁹⁾ produced far more convincing descriptions of flying machines, but Proctor avoided the temptation. His narrative of the voyages in both articles took the form of a log book, and he quite shamelessly dodged any area which would require more imagination than his scientific integrity could permit. Phrases such as "It would only confuse those whom this narrative will reach"⁽⁴⁰⁾ appeared as a result. When Proctor ventured so far as to show the voyagers finding an inhabited planet on their return from Saturn, he was not above dismissing from the log any recording of "Mimasian" life because it "would be quite impossible, unless those to whom we commit this narrative were prepared to devote a whole volume to such matters".⁽⁴¹⁾

Proctor was not quite "Dryasdust"⁽⁴²⁾ for he included a scientific joke at the expense of the reader in the article which included the "Mimasians". The log book recorded that they felt their planet was "the centre of the universe" and although it was

cylindrical in shape, "Mimasians" believed it to be flat.

Proctor, apart from being so prolific, is a typical writer of the popular science article. There is no reference to the beauty of nature in the form he depicted and no awareness of nature as a place. Only Lewes, in his compromised article openings, included such an awareness among popular science writers. For the rest, ponds, walls, stars, birds and insects were minutely observed with a closeness almost myopic, and this focus excluded any setting of the object in nature. Proctor's writing exposes a characteristic of the scientific view of nature: its narrow visual range.

The Naturalist

The journalists who either were, or appeared to be naturalists, offered a contrast to the popular science writers. They, like the artist, claimed a role as interpreter of nature. Their more enthusiastic style of writing is also reminiscent of the aesthetic view of nature. Like the aesthetic view presented to the reader in art reviews, the naturalists also described themselves as a small minority within society. They too use the image of the eyes, stressing that by actually viewing nature in the correct way, its beauty will be seen. This is a contrast to Hinton's view where he felt that to see through the eyes only results in a faulty view of natural phenomena.

Unlike the writers on popular science, the naturalists appeared set back in time. For example, although Darwinists⁽⁴³⁾ the writers were far more aware of Gilbert White of Selbourne than of their own important contemporary. White did not cast an

an oppressive shadow on the naturalist, on the contrary, they delighted in him. A number of new editions⁽⁴⁴⁾ of Selbourne were produced during the period 1859-1900, two of which were written by Jefferies⁽⁴⁵⁾ and Grant Allen.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Jefferies used his Preface to further his attack on Benthamite factual collecting in natural science, an attack he had already voiced in an article for Knowledge.⁽⁴⁷⁾ He praised White for his "voice" which for him sounded authentic, based on experienced knowledge and guided by close contact; grown in fact, rather than specially acquired from books. Allen preferred a biographer's style, and his Preface placed White within his own time, claiming him to be a precursor of Darwin and a pioneer of zoology. On the other hand, Allen's self-confessed approach to White was as if Selbourne were a classic of literature. His careful footnotes indicate his regard, and he found its style the highest quality of the book, capturing for him⁽⁴⁸⁾ more the essence of the 18th century leisured gentleman than the naturalist. Jefferies however lamented he had not found White earlier:

I did not come across Mr White's book till late in the day, when it was, in fact, too late, else this Calendar would have been of the utmost advantage to me.

(49)

All Allen lamented was the passing of amateur status in natural science research. When Allen's edition was reviewed in Bookman⁽⁵⁰⁾ the anonymous critic endorsed his feeling that the work was an endearing reminder of the past, and

not, as Jefferies felt, a relevant document for their own time. Selbourne was declared to be a perfect companion to the new edition of Walton's Compleat Angler.⁽⁵¹⁾

Of course, naturalists were aware that there had been changes in their area since White, but the presence of Darwin only meant a change in phrasing, so far as the naturalist articles in the "quality" journals show. Darwin was passed on in a digest.

Expressions such as "Nature - if not unduly interfered with by Man - preserves a tolerably even balance in all created things"⁽⁵²⁾ and "The struggle for existence among plants and animals is a hard one",⁽⁵³⁾ became an unnoticed, thoroughly accepted part of their linguistic stock in trade. Science, in the form of an adulterated Darwinism, was invoked in service of leisure interests. For to use "struggle for existence" as a cliché only tells the reader that the writer is well informed and up-to-date.

'Darwinism' is then used like a quotation, and so becomes more than a cliché, and takes on the significance of a literary signpost indicating that the article containing such language will be based on evolutionary principles. Jefferies, for example, in "Conforming to the Environment"⁽⁵⁴⁾ passed on observations of bird colouring and nest building to show adaptation, as his title would suggest, but he made no deductions from his observations. His reference to Darwin, made in the title, and in his use of the phrase "struggle for existence" he appeared to feel that deductions were irrelevant. There is no sense that he has written a proper article on Darwin, rather that Jefferies dressed up a naturalist's observations in fashionable clothing.

The references to Darwinism make the deductions for him. Jefferies is not singled out for castigation in this illustration. His article is representative of the use of Darwin in the 'quality' press. For the naturalists in the journals employed Darwinism only in relation to Darwin the naturalist. They avoided his theories and deductions. Thus Darwinism was not a controversial area for naturalists. Controversy was more likely to appear in articles which touched on game preservation. In that area naturalists could use scientific objectivity to prop up an economic argument:

At the same time the due proportions of animal life can only be maintained, as we all know, by that incessant warfare among living things which is everywhere observable.

(55)

Naturalist logic when reinforced by references to evolution presents a quite persuasive case for game preservation. If birds fight for survival themselves, it is then perfectly acceptable for gamekeepers to fight those birds who would prey on their valuable partridges and pheasants. Any suggestion that game preservation might itself be unnatural was then avoided. It was in this way that the scientific view of nature was employed by those who wished to defend game preservation, making it 'natural'. W.H. Hudson⁽⁵⁶⁾ writing for Fortnightly, openly stated that he did not feel game preservation was a proper area for naturalists. He put this statement at the beginning of his article on the "Common Crow". As a "good ornithologist" he claimed, he would not be writing on statistics or game preservation. It is true he did not, but he could not resist

gently debunking the "gentlemen in velveteens", (57) the gamekeeper:

The gamekeeper seldom fails to interest and amuse, but it must also be said of him that he is seldom helpful Any educated man with a love for his subject who spends his leisure hours, a field glass in hand, in observing the bird life of his district, will give a better account of it than can be gathered from the reports of a dozen gentlemen in velveteens.

(58)

The debate over game preservation will be developed further in its proper place in relation to hunters and poachers. Hudson's first taboo, against statistics, is more relevant here. He found it easy to resist that temptation.

Field Naturalist

A dislike of scientific methods, manifest in Jefferies' dislike of collecting, and Hudson's dislike of statistics, is characteristic of the Field Naturalist. Hudson made his declaration for the field in his article in 1895 but justification for field work, and condemnation of study work, is found throughout the period 1859-1900:

There are Naturalists and naturalists. Certain dreadful scientific persons who call themselves by that name seem to consider zoology and comparative anatomy as convertible terms. When they see a creature new to them they are seized with a burning desire to cut it up, to analyse it, to get it under the microscope, to publish a learned work about it, which no one can read without an expensive Greek Lexica, and to 'put up' its remains in cells and bottles.....

Then there are the 'field naturalists', who delight in penetrating to the homes and haunts of creatures which they love, and spend whole days and nights in watching their habits.

(59)

Once the naturalist became a field naturalist, and left the study, then the stress on field necessarily demanded that the naturalist be shown in nature within the article.

In the extracts so far given, the personal tone employed by naturalist writers can be seen, as well as their preference for being in nature rather than the study. Grant Allen ⁽⁶⁰⁾ was as typical for field naturalist writers as Proctor was for popular science. Allen too wrote prolifically, producing 137 articles ⁽⁶¹⁾ between 1877 and 1897 for six ⁽⁶²⁾ journals in addition to his short stories and novels. ⁽⁶³⁾ He again wrote chiefly for Cornhill and also for Knowledge ⁽⁶⁴⁾ and again, like Proctor, his articles were accepted by Cornhill's rivals, but not in such great numbers nor over continuous periods of time as was the case with Proctor. Allen had an easy style and all his articles were written in the same manner. "The Origin of Flowers" illustrates;

In the whole brilliant museum which lavish nature opens so bountifully before the eyes of those who can see - a class unhappily far smaller than it ought to be, but growing from day to day as each neophyte opens in turn the sealed eyes of his neighbours - there is nothing so lovely as the bright and graceful flowers, or hedgerows and our gardens.

(65)

Allen's article goes on to disclose the origin of flowers but the opening gambit is important. Again, as was seen in Lewes' articles, Allen employs a linguistic device taken from the "aesthetic" view of nature. He used it, not because the body of his article differed from the opening, but in order to establish himself with the reader.

By introducing himself, he attempts to give integrity and authenticity to his writing, convincing the reader by these personal statements that he knows his subject well. Allen does not assume the reader is present, but he sets the scene for the reader, in some instances, almost as if he were writing a letter to a friend:

I am lying on my back in the sunshine close to the edge of a southward sloping cliff, a green and smiling coast of Dorsetshire. There is a pleasant scent of thyme upon the breeze, and a drowsy buzzing strikes my ear from the great awkward humble-bee who is bustling about in his bully fashion from blossom to blossom just before my eyes. A few yards away a couple of country lassies, some four or five years old are picking bunches of centaury and buttercup, which they immediately pull to pieces with evident enjoyment of their destructive power. Being by trade a philosopher, I proceed to philosophise upon their conduct and pluck the nearest flower I can reach in imitation of my bucolic fellow creatures.

(66)

This extract from "Dissecting a Daisy" shows how Allen reinforced his role as field naturalist. He has shown that his dissection takes place in the field. The introduction serves as authentication and the "bucolic" children carry out that authenticity just as much as the scenery. Indeed, the fact that the children are dissecting makes it a 'natural' act.

It is logical that once the naturalist had to prove in the text that he was a field naturalist, then the labourer would also be offered within the articles as proof.

The labourer appears in the naturalist articles in the role of fauna and flora, just as Darwin appeared only as a naturalist.

They are both (the labourers and Darwinism) employed one-sidedly solely to establish the writers' credentials. A reference to Darwin 'proves' that the writer is a naturalist and a reference to a labourer 'proves' that the writer is a field naturalist.

When M.G. Watkins⁽⁶⁷⁾ wrote on "Plovers" for Graphic, he referred to the "rustic" to corroborate his field knowledge. "The rustic still deems their coming the harbinger of wet and storms".⁽⁶⁸⁾ Although we do not know if Watkins actually asked a "rustic", the sentence serves its purpose without elaboration, persuading by its presence that he must have been in the field because he knew the sayings of the "rustics" who were also there.

So useful was the opening, Allen used it to produce a city variant. A feather found in the street is built into an article:

A murky London winter afternoon is not exactly a good opportunity for the pursuit of natural history. The snow lies thick on the pavement outside, half-melted into muddy slush; while the fog penetrates through the cracks in the woodwork, and the sun struggles feebly athwart the thick yellow sheet which shuts off his rays from the lifeless earth.

(69)

This example almost overstretchers the literary device, but it was very much a part of Allen's style, and a recognised form for field naturalists.

There was an extension of this kind of 'proof' which proved even more popular with the editors. The team of Denham Jordan⁽⁷⁰⁾ and Jean A. Visger⁽⁷¹⁾ best demonstrate its use. They brought a fictional note to their articles. This is illustrated in "Birds of Prey" in which, like Hudson, they also show a dislike of the gamekeeper. However, they not only criticised him, they brought in the labourer as an alternative, to provide authentication. The labourer is presented in their articles as a helpful person in the field, especially there to aid the field naturalist, eclipsing the role of the gamekeeper. This article, representative of their extensive contributions to the journals, is written in the first person. It is a narrative of a man who collected birds of prey and employed labourers to catch them and to bring food for them. Jordan and Visger authenticate their article not with an intimate opening sentence, but with the voice of the labourer: "'Look at he fannin' away up there! don't her winner just about' you will hear them say sometimes."⁽⁷²⁾ The credibility already established by reference to a labourer is here reinforced by a longer conversation which reveals the labourers' willingness to help the field naturalist:

I ain't had no luck, master; I wishes I had, for 'tis a rare price to offer for 'em, an' our job is a dusty one, so a drop o' beer comes uncommon handy to the likes o' us, I can tell ye. No, we ain't had no luck at all, you'd hardly believe it, but the last lot o' stacks as we thrashed lately, there wan't a mouse or a rat in them. As to traps, they ain't no good this time o' year.

(73)

There could be no greater 'proof' that the 'writer' had been in the field and was a true naturalist. The content reassures the reader further, for not only was 'he' collecting live birds, almost

pets, but was arranging for them to be fed on the food they would normally eat. The voice of the labourer, 'quaint', civil and kindly, responding to the field naturalist, is most persuasive.

Jordan and Visger bring forward the labourer in a 'natural' way, not in the presentation of dialect perhaps, as in the way in which the labourer seems to be part of the natural habitat of the wild life. The reference to drink in the labourer's speech is not commented upon by them, for they were not concerned with the labourer himself, only as he was a part of the field. The closeness of the focus on the natural objects which formed the hobby allowed the labourer his role as a natural part of the habitat, and no more. His own habits, unless directly relevant, were not observed. This closer view of the labourer does mean that (whether real or a literary device) they did not suffer censure from the scientific view of nature as they did from the aesthetics. The myopia of the popular scientist also affects the field naturalists despite the fact that so much importance was placed on being in the field. Their eyes were not lifted very far from the object, and no sense of a panorama or breadth of view, as seen in the aesthetic view of nature, was presented in their scientific view of nature.

The Nature Rambler

Even though nature rambler articles were often written by naturalists, they too had a unique style and were easily

recognised as distinct from naturalists' articles. The naturalist was in the field with a purpose and the nature Rambler felt the same need for a purpose. This desire for an object brings in an implication that just to walk in nature was not diverting enough for readers. It might even be dull to walk in nature just for its good effect on the health of the walker:

It is a great matter for every pedestrian to have some definite end in view as the terminus of his morning walk across the downs - some object to which he makes his way, and in which he perceives a natural and proper turning-point for his self-imposed double stadium.

(74)

Jefferies, in the above article for St. James did not seem to believe, nor think that his readers might believe, that the soul or spirit of nature was enough of an object for the walk. The very fact that an object was required points to the narrow factual basis of the "scientific" view. Jefferies suggested that his readers "cultivate a modest taste for pre-historic barrows" (75) in order to enjoy more fully their walk across the downs. He did not set out in his article a history of barrows, but instead gave a smattering of information, sufficient, once "cultivated" for the reader to have a "modest taste". He did not suggest they study and nor did any other nature ramble writer. That was not the purpose of the ramble, but rather the reader should be entertained whilst in nature. Once there, they could appreciate empirical natural facts and this appreciation (not study) would be based on close observation: "You can't really understand a map or a picture till you have visited the country and seen the place ... represented". (76) This factual reassurance from nature will be

beneficial to "townsfolk":

simply in the hope that by putting country scenes, described in easy language, into the hands of townsfolk, I may be able to show them how much there is in Nature's book after all that is little expected by the ordinary dweller between walls.

(77)

The nature Rambler article could be informative or companionable, depending on the journal. 19th Century carried examples of the informative walk in its series "County Characteristics". (78)

In this extract the county is Kent:

But no amount of such reading would serve to impress the idiosyncrasy of a particular county upon the student's mind unless supplemented by what in the jargon of modern science is called 'autopsy'. One must saturate oneself with the atmosphere of the locality by long residence in it, familiarise the eye with its scenery, mingle with its natives, absorb their traditions and learn their ways, in order to apprehend the peculiar contour of its form and the tint of its colour so vividly as to make them apprehensible to others. The present writer is conscious of possessing these qualifications most inadequately, but an acquaintance extending over many years with a large portion of the county, and such observations as an inveterate propensity to 'tramp' every district within reach has enabled him to make, may suffice in default of a better equipment for the modest undertaking which he proposes to himself.

(79)

It is interesting to find in this passage aesthetic language employed for practical ends. However, despite the explicit reference in the language the writer was not concerned to find the soul of nature by saturating himself in the atmosphere of Kent, but a comprehensive knowledge of the county. Although he declared he was inadequate to his task, he put forward his nature rambles

4:23

as^a qualification. His ability to "tramp" suffices. The article is far from "modest" (a key term for nature rambles) being a thorough picture of Kent, and for all that the "natives" and their traditions should be known, no people were shown. The writer's tramping was not to look at them so much as at the scenery and the historic monuments of the county.

It should be noted that the rambles were not family walks. There were only two people on the walk, the writer and the reader. Children had their own walks in their own journals. "Spider Subjects" in Monthly Packet⁽⁸⁰⁾ gives the children's version. A child takes the readers (also children) on a "Country Sea-side Walk" to "hunt for 'objects' to fill our aquarium". The reader is clasped firmly by the hand: "Let us go down the straight white lane.... Let us follow up the stream.... Let us sit down and rest.... Here we are on the beach...."⁽⁸¹⁾ These instructions were also found on the adult's walk. Informative rambles took the reader to look at aristocratic graves⁽⁸²⁾ geology⁽⁸³⁾ or the homes of dead literary figures.⁽⁸⁴⁾ In all these rambles the writer was at the reader's elbow pointing out the fine detail:

As we pass along we note that there is beauty everywhere; of a minute kind even in the furrows of the newly ploughed field, with soft rich brown in the shadows, and an almost pearly light, reflected from white clouds, on the upper surfaces of the fresh-turned clods.

(85)

These details were not part of a scene, they were the only part pointed out. They serve to prove that the writer had taken the

walk described, just as the field naturalists' statements corroborated their presence in the field.

The companionable walk had such an intimate tone that it sometimes seemed as if all the readers were children: "Over in the field where lately we saw the busy black rooks following the plough, the sower is casting his seed for next year's harvest..."⁽⁸⁶⁾ The choice of the word "busy" to describe the rooks is an easy cliché, of the sort found in children's stories. Its presence stems from a necessity to point out objects to the reader, even though if they were actually on the walk together, such prompting would not be needed. As a result of such devices, the companionable Rambler could adopt an infantile tone:

Hark! Tap-twitter; tap-twitter. That is surely the nuthatch!.... let us creep cautiously up to that oak; we may perchance, observe this little nutcracker at his work. Quietly, there he is; his little blue-grey back and head bobbing up and down.

(87)

The rather cloying style distracts, but it should not escape notice that the same writer used both the bird and the sower to authenticate his presence on the walk as if they were equal components of the scene. Similarly, M.G. Watkins, taking the reader down "Devon Lanes and their Associations", passed on more "folklore" to the reader as proof that he had taken the walk. He states he was informed "if you lose your way, take off your coat, and having turned it inside out, put it on again".⁽⁸⁸⁾

This would put you on the right path. Such a use of the labourer brings in the presence of the interest in the labourer as an object in nature in his own right.

The Labourer as Repository

The presence of the collector is clear from the increasing appearance of the labourer in the natural science articles in the journals during the late 19th century. Jordan and Visger's articles look as if they were collectors of their reported conversations and dialect words, but if they were not, they had access in the 1890s to an increasing supply of useful data on the labourer.

The majority of the collections were made by folklore societies and they produced their glossaries in book form rather than in journal articles. W. Henderson for instance collected Notes on Folk Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders⁽⁸⁹⁾ and the appendix of that book was written by another folklore specialist, S. Baring Gould, whose own books on folklore were published between 1895 and 1913.⁽⁹⁰⁾ J. Harland produced two books, one in collaboration, on folklore from Lancashire in 1867 and 1875.⁽⁹¹⁾ C.S. Burne specialised in Shropshire⁽⁹²⁾ in 1883 and J. Nicholson in East Yorkshire⁽⁹³⁾ in 1890 leaving Gloucestershire to E.S. Hartland in 1895.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Folk rhymes were not neglected⁽⁹⁵⁾ nor "Wit, Character and Customs."⁽⁹⁶⁾

This is not to imply that there were no articles on labourer collections in the quality journals at all. Editors often gave room to articles on native customs, but rather as travelogues than the product of a scientific enquiry. "In the Land of Eisteddfod",⁽⁹⁷⁾ "Milkmaids and Shepherds"⁽⁹⁸⁾ and "Comparative Folk Lore"⁽⁹⁹⁾ are representative in that only one out of three was written from a scientific perspective. "The Poetry of Provincialism"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ was nearer the norm, where dialect words were valued because of their closeness to Chaucer and Latin roots. Once this classical tie was established, their poetry could be appreciated. In such articles, dialect was not valued in itself as an object, rather as a pointer to literary history. It was not until the 1890s that the journals began to give more space to articles on folklore, but these were still tied to travel rather than to science. E. Martinengo-Cesaresco, for instance, wrote a whole series on the folklore of Italy, producing twenty articles⁽¹⁰¹⁾ on the subject for four⁽¹⁰²⁾ competing journals between 1876 and 1900.

The journals presented a reflection of the material contained in the collections. Articles such as "A West Country Wit",⁽¹⁰³⁾ "Dorset Humour"⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and "Humours of Rustic Psalmody"⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ indicate a light presentation while lengthy articles on "Old Dorset"⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ and "Lincolnshire"⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ covered the whole range of local interests in a district in a manner more in keeping with the spirit of the collectors.

That spirit was again "modest" but held to scientific principles. Hartland, for instance, in English Fairy and Other Folk Tales, in

his introduction in 1890 hoped that he had:

succeeded in awakening the reader's interest in the subject, the writings of the distinguished man.... other anthropologist and the work issued by the Folklore Society, will not fail to reward him with that true pleasure which the really earnest and scientific study of any subject always gives.

(108)

When Charles J. Billson presented Volume III of County Folklore Gloucestershire in 1892 he apologised because his collection was of "no scientific value"⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ but the editor had been "liberal". Although he referred to the "oral tradition", he did not present any interviews in his book. The methods did not seem so important to the collectors as the systematic collection itself. When the statistician G. Laurence Gomme⁽¹¹⁰⁾ took up his place in the Folk Lore Society, their books were even more characterised by a professional and scientific air. He also preserved collections such as the Denham Tracts first made in 1846 and 1859 and these he republished with his own preface in 1895.

These collectors' interest in the labourers was semi-scientific, employing a smattering of anthropological and social science skills for their compilations. Unlike Mayhew⁽¹¹¹⁾ and Booth⁽¹¹²⁾ they were not interested in the interview, which if they used it as a method, was submerged in the glossary and dictionary presentations. Unionisation or conditions of work, or any empathy toward the labourer were missing from their focus of interest on his speech, as they were from all other branches of interest in science where

the labourer was seen. Their view was again myopic and related only to their own specialisation.

.....oOo.....

Jefferies brings out the awareness that the natural scientist, as represented in the quality journals, was a city dweller, only temporarily in nature. He pictures him returning home:

you emerge at Charing Cross, or London
Bridge, or Waterloo, or Ludgate Hill,
and with the freshness of the meadows
still clinging to your coat, mingle
with the crowd.

(113)

From these stations the Londoner would be able to reach the accessible southern countryside.

A movement can be traced in these articles which set out the scientific view of nature. The increased demand for the popularisation of the content of the journals during the latter half of the 19th century led to an increase in the number of field naturalist and nature Rambler articles. Their emphasis on the field and the presence of the reader on the walk made it look as if readers and writers were physically leaving their laboratories, or studies, going out into nature. Of course, the writer need not leave London to write a naturalist or nature Rambler article, nor the reader move from the drawing room to enjoy them. However, the increased accessibility of the country, gained from the extension of the railways, and the growth of the suburbs of London during the 1880s and 1890s, made an actual move into the country, just as described, quite possible for the readers and writers of the "quality" journals.

Once out in the open, all the natural objects collected and observed by the scientific nature lover were treated with equal interest, including the labourer. Within the scientific view, the labourer was seen at last; not as part of the assembly of harmonious objects, nor berated for threatening that harmony. The labourer was just another interesting object whose manners and speech were worth recording, just as bird song or animal life.

At first the labourer appeared only as an indicator to the reader that the field naturalist and nature Rambler had actually been to the places and habitat they described. In such a context, to describe close of day and couple it with the mention of the labourers returning from work,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ was quite natural. The labourer was then a sign of twilight, just as the sunset. But as the century progressed and the demand for a popular treatment of all subjects increased, so the labourer appeared more and more in the scientific view of nature. The relaxed and semi-fictional tone of Jordan and Visger in particular could encompass the labourer.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Walks could also be taken especially to look at labourers engaged in an interesting (to the observer) task. "Workers in Woodcraft",⁽¹¹⁶⁾ for example, were recommended as "well worth a visit" just as much as the woods in which they worked.

The scientific view of nature focused closely and had a narrow range. These largely fictional labourers who appear in the articles are adjuncts to a leisure interest and no more.

The city excursionists had no sense of a view and also, because of their tourist interest, no sense of proprietorship about nature. Their hobby was not subject to the vagaries of harmony or beauty, and so the labourer could neither please nor displease by his appearance, nor could his cottage. Only the gamekeeper came in for disparagement, for he was the only figure in the landscape who could affect the field naturalist and nature Rambler, either in the matter of trespass, or of access to some rare bird or plant. The labourer was a novice as far as such matters were concerned, and had no power to refuse information or permission to walk in certain areas of nature (such as breeding areas for game birds etc.). For these reasons the labourer was either not seen at all, or formed a natural part of the backdrop to the close study.

At the time when labourers were seen as repositories of rare information, agricultural unionisation was at its ebb, and education had made the labourer more accessible to the standard English speaker. The collectors did not wish the labourer to receive any more education⁽¹¹⁷⁾ for fear he would lose those 'quaint' and interesting words and ways they wished to record. Their impulse to collect stemmed from the same motive as the collector of flora and fauna. It was the rare item, the unique find, which appealed. Not until the villages were emptying and agriculture was stagnating could the labourer reach this point of interest. Collectors only took from the labourer the things they wished to have, and were not interested in the person as such, but had a scientific, detached interest.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Four

- (1) c.f. Allen, D.A. The Naturalist in Britain London 1976 and 1978. Chapter Six "Exploring the Fringes" pp. 122-140 (Pelican 1978 edition)
- (2) Looker, S.J. ed The Nature Diaries and Notebooks of Richard Jefferies Billericcy 1941
- (3) Bevens, A. "Knapsack Photography" Art Journal Jul. 1885 pp. 193-197
Lodge, R.B. "Bird Life in the Broads" Idler 1898 pp. 823-831
These two illustrations are representative of the use of photographs as illustrations of their rural scientific leisure pursuits.
- (4) Anon. "Art in Relation to Comparative Anthropology" Anthropological 1867 Vol V pp. 28-46
- (5) This picture was first shown in 1860. Hunt travelled to the Middle East especially to obtain 'genuine' models for the figures of Christ, Mary and the Doctors in the picture.
- (6) Of course, to criticise Hunt on the grounds of anthropological evidence, after his painstaking research would be damning.
- (7) James Hinton (1822-1875) surgeon, contributed to Fortnightly, Cornhill, Contemporary. His articles reprinted as Life in Nature London 1862 and Thoughts on Health London 1871
- (8) Hinton, J. "Seeing with Eyes Shut" Cornhill Jul. 1862 p. 66
- (9) ibid. p.65
- (10) George Henry Lewes (1817-1878) contributed at first to the journals on drama and supported his first marriage solely by his earnings as a writer. He was editor of Westminster and Fortnightly in 1851 and 1865 respectively. He did not take up his scientific pursuits until 1856 and contributed to Blackwoods and Cornhill on this subject in the 1860s. (DNB)
- (11) Thackeray was editor of Cornhill from Jan. 1866 til May 1862
- (12) It was an extract from The Excursion:
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power,
And central peace subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation.
- (13) Lewes, G.H. "Studies in Animal Life" Cornhill Jan. 1860 p. 61

- (14) ibid. Feb. 1860, p. 198
- (15) These were journals such as: Annals of Botany, Annals of British Geology, Anthropological, Archaeologia, Entomologist, Entomologists Monthly Magazine, Entomologists Record and Journal of Variation, Geological Magazine and Geologist, Geographical Journal, Geographical Magazine, Ibis, Journal of Botany, Journal of Microscopy and Natural Science, Journal of Science, Meteorological Records, Natural History Notes, Natural History Review, Naturalist, Naturalist Journal, Naturalists Circular, Naturalists Gazette, Naturalists Notebook, Naturalists Record, Naturalists Repository, Naturalists World, Natural Science, Nature, Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society, Zoologist.
- (16) Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society is an example of a journal belonging to a scientific society. It was used to publish the papers given at meetings and also to arrange for specimens to be circulated. This was also the purpose of Naturalists Circular and Wesley Naturalist Journal.
- (17) Coudereau, M. "On Intelligence and its relation to Instinct" Anthropological Oct. 1868 pp. 399-408
- (18) Schaaffhausen, Prof. H. "On the Primitive Form of the Human Skull" Anthropological Oct. 1868 pp. 412-431
- (19) Huggins, W. "Comets" 19th Century Aug. 1882 pp. 270-281
 Anon. "Comets" Frasers Jan. 1862 pp. 85-110
 Proctor, R. "Dangers from Comets" Cornhill Dec. 1881 pp. 696-712
 Proctor, R. "The Menacing Comet" Cornhill Nov. 1882 pp. 546-556
 Proctor, R. "Thoughts about Comets" Cornhill Oct. 1886 pp. 425-434
 Proctor, R. "Comets" Contemporary Oct 1882 pp. 628-640
 Proctor, R. "A Missing Comet and a Coming Meteor Shower" St Pauls Dec. 1872 pp. 681-691
 Proctor, R. "Comets and Comet's Tails" St Pauls 1871 Sep. pp 547-558
 Proctor, R. "Comets Tails" Cornhill Sep. 1874 pp. 309-318
 Proctor, R. "The Two Comets of the Year 1868" Part One Frasers Feb. 1869 pp. 164-170 and Part Two Frasers Jun. 1869 pp. 739-746
 Proctor, R. "Professor Tyndall's Theory of Comets" Frasers Oct. 1869 pp. 504-512
 Proctor, R. "Whence Came the Comets?" 19th Century May 1886 pp. 689-696

- (20) The Dictionary of Dates shows that there were comets in 1858 (Donati's), 1861 (The Great Comet), 1874 (Coggia's) 1881 (Denning's), 1886 (Brooks') 1886 (Bernard's). Proctor's writings seem to suggest that a comet was either sighted or expected in 1868 and 1882, in addition to the 1872 comet which he records did not appear as expected.
- (21) York, B. "The Misfortunes of a Geologist" St Pauls Jan. 1873 pp. 97-103
- (22) Hewlett, H.G. "The Rationale of Mythology" Cornhill Apr. 1877 pp. 407-423
- (23) Clifford, W.K. "On the Aims and Instruments of Scientific Thought" Macmillans Oct. 1872 pp. 499-512
- (24) c.f. Allen, op.cit. Chapter Two "The Rise to Fashion" pp. 26-51 for further information on the fashionable element in the 19th century interest in natural science.
- (25) Clerke, A.M. "The Chemistry of the Stars" Edinburgh Oct. 1880 pp. 408-443
- (26) Richard Proctor (1837-1888) astronomer. Proctor began a career as a lawyer but gave it up for his encroaching interest in astronomy and mathematics. He began writing in journals in 1865 as a professional journalist and added to his name and income by a series of lectures, some of which were made in America. In 1881 he established his own journal Knowledge, a weekly which became a monthly in 1885. He married an American and moved there in 1887. (DNB)
- (27) Proctor's articles can be easily found in Wellesley. The following are some of his Longman's articles, less accessible as Longman's is an unindexed journal.
 - "Earthquakes in England" Aug. 1884 pp. 382-392
 - "Two Sun Like Planets" Jan. 1885 pp. 254-267
 - "The Language of Whist" Oct. 1885 pp. 596-611
 - "Is Whist Signalling Honest?" Apr. 1886 pp. 606-11
 - "Sun and Meteors" Jan. 1886 pp. 261-274
- (28) Cornhill, Contemporary, St Pauls, Frasers, Longman's Fortnightly, National and 19th Century.
- (29) Trollope was editor of St Pauls from Oct. 1867 til Jul. 1870.
- (30) Proctor, R. "Autobiographical Notes" New Science Review (New Science) May 1896 p. 394
- (31) In 1866 the New Zealand Banking Corporation collapsed completely. Proctor had all his property invested in the bank.

- (32) Proctor, Autobiography, op.cit. p. 396
- (33) These are the books listed in Wellesley which gives the names of anthologies of articles. Such a large number indicates that Proctor either meticulously republished every article, or he compiled anthologies from his general science contributions together with some of his anonymous contributions to Knowledge.
- (34) 1884-1904
- (35) Proctor, R. "Notes on Flying and Flying Machines" Cornhill Sep. 1872 pp. 295-307
- (36) Proctor, R. "A Voyage to the Sun" Cornhill Mar. 1872 pp. 322-335
- (37) Proctor, R. "A Voyage to the Ringed Planet" Cornhill Sep. 1872 pp. 295-307
- (38) c.f. Wells' science fiction novels such as War of the Worlds London 1898 and even Tono Bungay London 1908 where machines are actually described in detail.
- (39) Jefferies' interest in flying machines was based on his observation of insects. c.f. Looker, S.J. (ed) Field and Farm London 1957 "Introduction" p. 17
- (40) Proctor, "Ringed Planet", op.cit. p. 304
- (41) ibid. p. 305
- (42) Leslie Stephen's term for learned writers who lacked the art of entertaining exposition.
- (43) As much, or as little as the term meant for each journalist. None criticised Darwin.
- (44) New editions of Selbourne were published in 1860, 1862, 1869, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1880, 1882, 1886, 1887, 1891, 1894, 1895, 1900.
- (45) Jefferies, R. (ed) The Natural History of Selbourne London 1887
- (46) Allen, G. (ed) The Natural History of Selbourne London 1900
- (47) Jefferies, R. "Humanity and Natural History" Knowledge Jun. 5 1883 pp. 5-6
- (48) and for present readers of Selbourne.
- (49) Jefferies, Selbourne, op.cit. Preface
- (50) Anon. "Review" Bookman Jul. 1899 p. 114
- (51) ibid. p. 114

- (52) Anon. "The Balance of Nature" Chambers Aug. 2 1879 p. 493
- (53) Jefferies, R. "Conforming to the Environment" St James Jun. 24 1886 p. 5
- (54) ibid. pp. 5-6
- (55) Anon, Chambers, op.cit. p. 493
- (56) W.H. Hudson (1841-1922) naturalist and writer, gained the attention of the "magic circle" by his books: The Naturalist in La Plata (1892) and Birds in a Village (1893). He was so great an admirer of Richard Jefferies that he asked to be buried close to his grave. They are both buried in Worthing Cemetery, Sussex.
- (57) c.f. T.E.Kebbel in Chapter Five who described the poacher as a man in velveteens. p. 5:25
- (58) Hudson, W.H. "The Common Crow" Fortnightly May 1895 p. 799
- (59) Wood, J.G. "The Home of a Naturalist" Cornhill Jun. 1862 p. 736
- (60) Grant Allen (1848-1899) was born in the same year as Jefferies. Allen was an ardent Darwinist of the Herbert Spencer school. All his articles on natural science show an attempt to weave an evolutionary moral into the material. He earned his living as a journalist and a novelist. He did not become an editor but was for a time on the staff of Daily News.
- (61) Some of Allen's articles in unindexed journals:
Longman's
 "The Ancestry of Birds" Jan. 1884 pp. 284-297
 "Honey Dew" Nov. 1884 pp. 35-47
 "An Ancient Lake Bottom" Jun. 1885 pp. 183-195
 "The First Potter" Jul. 1885 pp. 261-269
 "Evelyn Moor's Poet" (short story) Mar. 1895 pp. 487-511
Knowledge in 1883 under the heading A Naturalist's Year
 "Winter: Heliotrope" Jan. 5 pp. 20-1
 "Gorse Blooms" Jan. 12 pp. 49-50
 "The Peewit Cries" Jan. 25 pp. 51-2
 "Willow Catkins" Feb. 9 pp. 112-3
 "Snow Drops and Snowflakes" Feb. 23 pp. 143-4
 "The Ptarmigan" Apr. 6 pp. 203-4
 "Marsh Marigold" Apr. 20 pp. 259-60
 "A Geological Excursion" May 4 pp. 33-4 (title page)
 "Two Little Greenish Flowers" May 11 pp. 276-7
 "The Chair Jump" May 23 pp. 175-6
 "The Blackcap Sings" May 25 pp. 303-4 (title page)
 "Among the Grasses" Jun. 8 pp. 336-7
 "Concerning Bats" Jun. 22 pp. 367-8 (title page)
 "Crabs and Lobsters" Jul. 20 pp. 1-2 (title page of journal)

- (61) continued
 Grant Allen's A Naturalist's Year in Knowledge 1883
 "Wasps and Flowers" Aug. 3 pp. 65-6
 "A Rabbit's Skull" Aug. 17 pp. 97-8
 "Wild Peas" Aug. 31 pp. 129-130
 "The Barn Owl Flies" Sep. 14 pp. 161-2
 "Blackberries are Ripe" Sep. 28 pp. 193-4
 "The Shrews Die" Oct. 12 pp. 224-5
 "Chestnuts Fall" Oct. 26 pp. 251-2
 "Under False Colours" Nov. 16 pp. 297-8
 "The Reign of Evergreens" Nov. 30 pp. 327-8
 "Robins come for Crumbs" Dec. 14 pp. 355-6 (title page of journal)
- (62) Macmillans, Longman's, Cornhill, Knowledge, Contemporary, National
- (63) Allen's most famous novel was The Woman Who Did (1891) written in protest against the subjugation of women by marriage. His logical Darwinism made it a tragic tale, for the illegitimate child followed the principle of 'survival of the fittest' and found it easier to conform to society rather than isolating herself with her anarchic mother.
- (64) Proctor recruited several of his fellow Cornhill writers for Knowledge.
- (65) Allen, G. "The Origin of Flowers" Cornhill May 1878 p. 534
- (66) Allen, G. "Dissecting a Daisy" Cornhill Jan. 1878 p. 61
- (67) The Reverend Morgan George Watkins (b. 1835) was an amateur journalist who contributed mainly on nature rambles and fishing to Cornhill, Edinburgh and Quarterly.
- (68) Watkins, M.G. "Plovers" Graphic Jan. 27 1883 p. 96
- (69) Allen, G. "Pleased with a Feather" Cornhill Jun. 1879 p. 712
- (70) Denham Jordan (b. 1836) naturalist. c.f. Parker, E. Surrey Naturalist London 1952. The team contributed 23 articles each to Blackwoods and Cornhill and less articles to Fortnightly, National and Macmillans. They often employed the pseudonym "A son of the Marshes"
- (71) Jean A. Visger (Pinder) (1841-1922) see above.
- (72) Jordan, D. and Visger, J.A. "Birds of Prey" Cornhill Apr. 1889 p. 367

- (73) *ibid.* p. 370
- (74) Jefferies, R. "Barrows" St. James Oct. 3 1882 p. 6
- (75) ibid. p. 6
- (76) Jones, H. "A Rambler's Reflections" Cornhill Mar. 1889 p. 270
- (77) Panton, J.E. Country Sketches in Black and White London 1882 p. iv
- (78) Tregellas, W.J. "County Characteristics - Cornwall" 19th Century Nov. 1887 pp. 680-691
 Hewlett, J.G. "County Characteristics - Sussex" 19th Century Aug. 1884 pp. 320-338
 Hewlett, H.G. "County Characteristics - Surrey" 19th Century Aug. 1885 pp. 274-283
- (79) Hewlett, H.G. "County Characteristics - Kent" 19th Century Aug. 1881 p. 297
- (80) "Bog-Oak", "Spider Subjects" Monthly Packet Oct. 1884 pp. 393-397
- (81) ibid. pp. 393-395
- (82) Doran, J. "From Dan to Beersheba, through Ashridge Park" Cornhill Sep. 1861 pp. 348-359
- (83) Watkins, M.G. "Up Glen Roy" Cornhill Dec. 1877 pp. 701-70
- (84) Hall, F.C. and Mrs. Hall, "Memories of the Authors of the Age" Art Journal 1866 pp. 245-276 (Wordsworth)
- (85) Tregellas, W.H. "On Some Pictorial Glories of Late Autumn" Art Journal Nov. 1885 p. 331
- (86) Walker, E.S. "Out of Doors in November" Good Words Nov. 1883 p. 710
- (87) ibid. p. 710
- (88) Watkins, M.G. "Devon Lanes and their Associations" Cornhill Jun. 1864 p. 745
- (89) Henderson, W. Notes on Folklore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders London 1866
- (90) She also contributed to the journals on this subject.
- (91) Harland, J. and Wilkinson, T.T. Lancashire Folklore London 1867 and Harland, J. Ballads and Songs of Lancashire London 1875

- (92) Burne, C.S. Shropshire Folklore London 1883
- (93) Nicholson, J. Folklore of East Yorkshire London 1890
- (94) Hartland, E.S. County Folklore Vol. I Gloucestershire London 1895
- (95) Northall, G.F. English Folk Rhymes London 1892
- (96) Blakeborough, R. Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire (with a glossary of over 400 words and idioms now in use) London 1898
- (97) Wicks, F. "In the land of Eisteddfod" Cornhill Oct. 1863 pp. 478-487
- (98) Watkins, M.G. "Milkmaids and Shepherds" Graphic Sep. 22 1883 p. 306
- (99) Farrar, F.W. "Comparative Folk Lore" Cornhill Jan. 1876 pp. 41-60
- (100) Wise, J.R. de C. "The Poetry of Provincialisms" Cornhill Jul. 1865 pp. 30-42
- (101) all these journal entries are indexed in Wellesley
- (102) Contemporary, Cornhill, Frasers, National.
- (103) Edgecombe, Sir R. "A West Country Wit" Cornhill Feb. 1898 pp. 196-200
- (104) Edgecombe, Sir R. "Dorset Humour" Cornhill Aug. 1900 pp. 238-250
- (105) Houlden, J.C. "Humours of Rustic Psalmody" Cornhill Jan. 1893 pp. 50-6
- (106) Elton, C. "Old Dorset" Edinburgh Jul. 1894 pp. 35-60
- (107) Jeans, G.E. "Lincolnshire" Quarterly Jul. 1891 pp. 100-30
- (108) Hartland, E.S. English Fairy and Other Folk Tales London 1893 p. xxv
- (109) Billson, C.J. Rev. County Folklore Vol. III Leicestershire and Rutland London 1892 see Prefatory Note.
- (110) Sir G. Laurence Gomme was best known for his contributions to the localist/centralist debate over the government of London. He was a localist and became in 1897 a lecturer at the London School of Economics in Local Government.

- (111) Henry Mayhew (1812-1887) was an investigative journalist for Morning Chronicle. c.f. Thompson, E.P. and Yeo, E. The Unknown Mayhew London 1973
- (112) Charles Booth (1840-1916) was a business man as well as a documentor of urban life. c.f. Fried, A. and Elman, R. (ed) Charles Booth's London London 1971
- (113) Jefferies, R. "Footpaths" Standard Nov. 3 1880 collected in Nature Near London pp. 25-6 in 1892 edition.
- (114) Rix, H. "An Autumn Ramble down the Rother" Good Words Aug. 1883 pp. 498-507
- (115) Indeed in the articles signed "A Son of the Marshes" they pretend they are a labourer.
- (116) Watson, J. "Workers in Woodcraft" National Mar. 1891 pp. 91-104 written under the pseudonym "Rusticus"
- (117) c.f. Geary, C. Rural Life Its Humour and Pathos London 1894 and all the works by E.S. Hartland cited above for a dislike of further education for the labourer and a regret that as a consequence of the education they had received they were losing their 'quaint' speech.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Hedonist View of Nature

Pleasures of Hunting

The articles in the quality journals which covered hunting were written to further the pleasures of the sport. Fishing⁽¹⁾ and fox hunting,⁽²⁾ even falconry⁽³⁾ were represented, but the majority of the articles centred on the pleasures to be found in shooting. Shooting was the most accessible sport for city readers of the quality journals. It required less financial outlay and could be enjoyed on visits to the country. Game preserves could be hired, and shooting skills acquired in the city. A fox hunter, on the other hand, had to show a regular country commitment in order to be a member of a local hunt, and the horsemanship required could not easily be practised when riding in the city. Of course, horses could be hired for the country, in the same way as guns, but not being manufactured, a hired horse was a greater risk. Even though the majority of the hunter writers concerned themselves with shooting, as the sport most appealing to city dwellers, they did not presume to teach the "rules" or the mores. Shooting, they implied, was a pleasure and not a study, although they allowed that practice might improve the novice. The writers expected, or kindly assumed, that the reader was already an excellent hunter. There was no need for the writer to inform or to recruit. The pleasures of hunting were available to all who possessed "instinct". The writers applied instinct as an attribute of hunters who could skillfully fire a gun, as well as of those who could ride well and use the hounds correctly. The writers were aware that repeated physical

actions would aid instinct as would patience, but being innate, it could not be acquired. The hunter was therefore natural. The reader enjoyed again the pleasures of hunting, both physical and mental, in the journal articles covering his sport.⁽⁴⁾

The writers treated the reader to anecdotes, full descriptions of meals and to a presentation of tangible practical things to feel, to handle and to enjoy. Hunting articles offered city men a tonic for jaded nerves and appetites. To hunt, and to read of the pleasures of hunting, would blow away the cobwebs and return the participants and readers to a natural state, giving back health deteriorated by metropolitan life.

The representative writers on hunting to be examined in this chapter are T.E. Kebbel,⁽⁵⁾ Jefferies and John Watson.⁽⁶⁾ Kebbel was the most prolific of these writers, producing numerous articles on hunting and poaching alone, in addition to his contributions on country life. His writings on hunting were published in Cornhill in the 1860s and 70s and in the more conservative journals: Blackwoods, Edinburgh, Quarterly during the 1880s and 90s. He was also known as an expert on the labourer, as his book The Agricultural Labourer testifies.⁽⁷⁾ It was Jefferies' serial contributions to Pall Mall Gazette in 1878 and 1879: "The Gamekeeper at Home and The Amateur Poacher" which gave him his reputation as an authority on hunting. He also contributed sports news for the city man anxious to know what sort of sport was in store for him in the country. St. James's Gazette published these articles which carried explicit titles: "Partridges in 1880",⁽⁸⁾



MEMS. FOR THE MOORS.

(By Our City Sporting Gent.)

"FIRE INSTANTLY WHEN A BIRD RISES,—IF YOU HIT, YOU 'VE A BETTER CHANCE TO KILL."

Figure 5:1



MEMS. FOR THE MOORS.

(By Our City Sporting Friend.)

"IF YOU HAPPEN TO WING A BIRD, CATCH IT—AS YOU BEST CAN!"

Figure 5:2

"Pheasant Breeding"⁽⁹⁾ and "The Prospects of the First".⁽¹⁰⁾ These articles provided factual accounts of the birds, their size, the kind of cover they liked at that time, the weather and the current state of agriculture which was the terrain of the hunter. They appeared in the paper at peak times, when the hunter in the city was getting ready to go into the country for the first shoot of the season. At less crucial times in the hunting calendar, Jefferies contributed to the same paper descriptive accounts of particular sports. These covered such subjects as "Rabbit Shooting",⁽¹¹⁾ "Wild Fowling"⁽¹²⁾ and "Rook Shooting".⁽¹³⁾ John Watson's contributions on hunting were made in the same conservative journals which accepted Kebbel's articles. Both writers were contributing during the same time span: 1888-1895. Although they shared the same market area, their journalistic products differed. Watson was an advocate of the natural hunter: the poacher, whereas Kebbel felt the poacher to be a totally unnatural vicious creature.

In addition to these writings which carry the hedonist view of nature, and the conflicting images of poachers, the chapter also contains a sample of Punch cartoons taken from 1874 and 1889, which illustrate by ridicule the fashionable leisure interest in hunting. Cartoons such as those by "our City Sporting Gent" titled "Mems from the Moors" (Figs. 1 & 2) expose the city man attempting to be a hunter. "Mems", short for memorandum, indicates quite clearly that hunting was not quite so instinctive as would be supposed from the quality journals' articles.

The Pleasure to be found in Hunting

Jefferies described for the reader the pleasures to be found in shooting rabbits:

All this time a regular fusillade is going all around you, and the beaters are yelling like madmen, "Rabbit forward! Rabbit back! Rabbit right! Rabbit left! till you wonder when your turn is to come. Ah! here he comes, listening intently to the sounds behind him as he picks his way beneath the bushes. Now he is quite near enough and your gun is to your shoulder; but he won't show fairly, constantly keeping some stump or trunk between him and you. At last, however, an opening occurs: he has to go pass over a yard of unprotected ground, and this is your chance; you have to shoot through some twigs, but this doesn't matter; you pull the trigger, and you do not miss.

(14)

The drama and the excitement of the shoot are made very clear in this extract. Although all the details might sound like instructions, this effect is eradicated by the presence of the reader actually on the shoot. Instead of instructing, Jefferies is describing. A touch of the intimate tone of the nature Rambler is present in the description, but only in the projection of the reader into the activity. In comparison to nature rambling, hunting was presented as a far more active leisure interest, involving more intense physical movement than required for a nature ramble. When the hunter did walk without his gun, Jefferies described it as a "prowl":

If we prowl about long enough we shall probably be delighted by the rush of pinions which denotes a covey on the wing; for not only has the hay been late, but the birds have been early this year, and there are some nearly as large as thrushes even now.

(15)

No nature Rambler would describe the walk as a "prowl".

Kebbel, too, brought out the pleasure of shooting, and made its accessibility clear:

Our present object is to write a few pages about a sport which is comparatively accessible to all men fond of shooting; which is emphatically the sport of the middle classes; which exists by conditions very different from those which attend upon cover or battue shooting: - which is far more healthy and invigorating, and which above all is the sport of the month now commencing, thrice blessed September.

The walk and the talk, the scenery, the ever varying excitement of finding, following and starting your swift and crafty quarry; the behaviour of the dogs, for we write not of that partridge shooting from which pointers and setters are discarded; all combine to make up the pleasures of the day.

(16)

In the first paragraph the pleasure of hunting is emphasised in every clause beginning "which". The extract contains passing derogatory comments on the kinds of shooting which were to be avoided: "cover or battue" and shooting without dogs. The second paragraph lists the physical ingredients of the pleasures in hunting. Again, these are the pleasures of excitement and physical movement.

Kebbel claimed that "high faculties" were required to shoot "properly" and these were: "knowledge" both of bird and environment, "power to deduce from local evidence" and "quickness and steadiness of eye". He also demanded that the shooter must hold his dogs in until he had "felt" his birds. This odd use of the word "felt" shows the physical pleasure of hunting. Jefferies employed the same term in "Rabbit Shooting":

All this, however, is more easily felt than described; and where there are plenty of rabbits you will have had half a dozen shots in the time it takes to write these words.

(17)

Lunch was one of the physical pleasures much prized by Kebbel. He always gave space to a description of the huntsman's lunch in the open. His enjoyment was uninhibited:

The best of luncheon on a winter day's shooting is that you can eat and drink as much as you feel inclined to eat and drink, without either damaging yourself for the day's work, or spoiling your appetite for dinner.

(18)

Apart from its frank self-indulgence, such a comment makes the hunting day sound very much like an office day. The business man, out of the city, could enjoy freely those pleasures he denied himself while working for fear of their effects both on his work and social life. When out shooting, the pleasures of a heavy lunch could be fully enjoyed without fear of ruining other pleasures in store. It could be enjoyed even after a

"good - perhaps late - breakfast".⁽¹⁹⁾ Kebbel always described the food in detail, paying attention to the alcohol consumed which also played a large part in the pleasure. There was always beer: "plenty of good brisk beer"⁽²⁰⁾ and glasses of sherry. Kebbel made one reference in an article⁽²¹⁾ to a whole barrel of beer being taken on the hunt, which was consumed partly at lunch and the remainder during the afternoon. "Cold pie" and "cold beef"⁽²²⁾ or "game pie, cold beef, stilton and celery"⁽²³⁾ or perhaps "pigeon pie, or cold fowl..a crust and stilton",⁽²⁴⁾ formed his usual huntsman's lunch. Kebbel did warn against drinking too much in the winter when, he considered, the cold would make the liquor more effective. Kebbel was quite aware that his physical pleasures were amusing: "The first hour after luncheon, is somehow or other, never very successful. You each of you miss an easy shot".⁽²⁵⁾ Such an intimate tone, reminiscent of the rambler was also a feature of the hunting article. The two shooting ("You each of you") are the hunter and the reader. Other familiar and recognisable languages for nature appeared when Kebbel described the after-lunch pleasures of reclining on "a bit of cool clean sloping turf". These pleasures included appreciating the landscape and a doze. The landscape descriptions were always luxurious:

Cool dark clustering elms, the rich ripe oak, and the livelier tints of the sunny beach, contrast with the exquisite light green of the meadows, untouched since they were mown, and the deeper shades of the turnip fields and wurzel.... while every here and there peeps out from among the trees the yellow thatched cottage, or gable-ended old farm, sending its smoke into the air, the very emblem of immemorial tranquillity.

(26)

It might be the season⁽²⁷⁾ or the associations of hunting lunches (lasting like a long office break from twelve-thirty till three o'clock) but whatever the reason, Kebbel's articles contained "mellow" after-lunch landscape descriptions. Despite the familiarity of the adjectives which idealised the "timeless" quality of the country, the landscape was more precisely described than was the case with the aesthetic view of nature. The explicit reference to turnip fields and wurzel (excellent cover for partridges) point to the practical huntsman's eye rather than that of the artist. The landscape was a pleasure not only for its own beauty, but also because it was the terrain of the hunter, concealing the birds and animals which were the object of the hunt.

When Kebbel actually described the shoot the prose was brisk and efficient to suit the task:

Here you are at the side of a nice ash spinney, intersected with ditches, and sloping down to a bit of a brook in the middle. Will you go inside or out? Inside. Very well. Always goes the stump of your cigar. Your shot pouch is hitched round a little: or, if you use a breech loader, the belt receives a final tug. Here's the best place to get over. Now, then, are you all right? Very well. Let the dogs go; and the day has begun.

(28)

It is similar in style to the invitation to the walk offered by the nature Rambler but its jerkiness and physical detail fit the circumstances of hunting well. There is also in these short sentences an anticipation of excitement.

The 'manliness' of tone discernable in the above extracts was a part of the hunting article. It is best displayed in the 'jokes'. Kebbel's self-mockery over his tendency to miss his shots immediately after lunch indicates a little of this quality, but his hunting jokes could also be rather brutal. For example, after explaining that it was bad practise, either accidentally or as punishment, to fire at one's dogs, he did allow that a man "or, what is more likely, a little boy" would be "taught caution" if "peppered in his less vital parts". He then commented to lady readers: "Such, ladies, is the brutal style of talk with which your brothers and husbands habitually regale themselves 'after lunch'".⁽²⁹⁾ Despite this disparagement, the anecdotes formed a part of the pleasures of hunting. Kebbel offered his own 'after-lunch' story to readers:

I was about seventeen, I believe, at the time. Ducks were scarce in our neighbourhood, and I lived very little at home. It was a very hard winter, and I was determined to have blood or perish in the snow. They got up, two of them, out of a large ditch, nearly full of half frozen water, from under a great hawthorn bush, on which the berries blushed through the snow like a bride's cheek through her lace.

(30)

Kebbel then relieved the blatancy - and potency - of the 'virgin' image by adding in self-conscious irony: "This simile, I confess, I thought of at a subsequent period".

The link between hunting and sensuality is further manifested by A.I. Shand.⁽³¹⁾ He too felt that sexual imagery was appropriate in a description of a hunting scene:

Fresh as the waking breeze that lifts the skirts of the mist mantle still enveloping the drowsy mountain tops; with spirits buoyant as the air that sends the light pulses of your heart bounding along at the double.

(32)

The area of nature where sport took place was to Shand a paradise. "Sin and death must enter, of course, for the paradise is earthly, and in a sense sensual."⁽³³⁾ His paradise was not impaired by bad weather. The moors and its shooting could be "repelling ... triste ... eerie" under bad conditions, but in fine weather the scenery would appeal to both "the poetry and the prose" of the hunter. Shand took the huntsman's after-lunch joke even further than Kebbel and used family life as a metaphor for the wild life he wished to kill. Rather than seeking to play down any human element in the objects of the hunt, Shand found it amusing to be anthropomorphic:

He is up and away, leaving his wife to look after the chickens, with the confirmed selfishness of a family man demoralised by bachelor habits. His cheery crow of triumph is premature. You give him law enough, and then drop him with a heavy thud on the heather, in all the delicate consideration for his plumage that the circumstances admit of. Nor does his widow survive a score of seconds to lament her lord, and before the last pair of interesting orphans have collected their faculties sufficiently to leave the scene of the bloody drama, you have charged with a fresh pair of cartridges and taken a couple of pot shots.

(34)

The hearty and heavy imagery is in keeping with these coarser pleasures in hunting. Such "chaff"⁽³⁵⁾ amongst hunters made up one the pleasures of the hunt, as did the anecdotes which

associated blushing brides with shooting 'virgin' ducks and lifting skirts with the light of the hunting terrain. So prevalent was this aspect of the hunting article, it could be found when hunting was not the main subject of an article, but was only mentioned in passing:

The thick mist that hung over the moors in the morning has melted away in the sunshine, and a gentle breeze shakes the heather bells, and dimples the blue sea. The coveys are small and scarce, for the June thunder storms thinned out the delicate young birds with tender lungs; but the old fellows are in splendid feather....

(36)

Although there are moments when the respective languages of the aesthetic and scientific views of nature are present in the articles written for hunting, the hedonist view is clearly distinguished from them by its focus on physical pleasures.

Pleasures Spoilt by Change

For all that the writers kept the pleasures of hunting before the readers, they were also concerned with complaints against changes in their sports and in their sporting arena. Many of the pleasures of the hunt were, as a consequence, given in the form of reminiscences and anecdotes. Thus nostalgia became yet another pleasure for the hunter in the quality journals.

It was the Game Law debate which emphasised the modern element in hunting that grieved the writers on hunting. An anonymous

article in Fraser's "Our Food Supply and the Game Laws" focused attention on the consequences of high farming, battue shooting and modern weaponry. The article spelt out the basic facts. First, high farming, or scientific farming, changed the habitat of the game bird by using the ground more intensively. Hedges were reduced in order to gain larger fields and less shade, and the stubbles were ploughed in earlier in the autumn than before. The increased use of machinery and consequently less use of field labour, meant that less care was taken over nests or young birds found in the fields. The game bird was therefore bereft of safe places to feed. Once the habitat of the game bird was threatened, its chances of survival until for the open season were less, and those which survived became too wild to be easily shot. Game preservation provided a safer environment for the game bird. Secondly, the new taste in battue shooting, where large quantities of birds were "walked up" (See Fig. 3) to the shooters by beaters (instead of the shooters going in search of the birds with dogs) required game preservation to supply the necessary large numbers of birds. And thirdly, the development of new weapons facilitated the battue shooter, since rapid firing was needed when the object of the battue was to kill as many of the birds as quickly as possible as soon as they were brought into range.

The hunter writer's nostalgic 'golden age' was a time when the game bird roamed the landowners' property (in fact this terrain was still rented out to tenant farmers) in relatively small numbers. Once artificially reared in larger numbers, they still fed off the same acreage and so caused greater damage to crops.



THE LATEST LUXURY.

SEND THE BEATERS INTO THE TURNIP FIELD ABOVE, AND HAVE THE BIRDS DRIVEN OVER THE HEDGE TO YOU.

Tenant farmers, already farming their lands more carefully by new methods, pushed for legislation⁽³⁷⁾ against the landowners. They wanted either the right to shoot too, or to prevent game birds from roaming over, and eating off, their cultivated land. Large numbers of game birds were also seen to encourage poachers by making illicit hunting more worthwhile. It was claimed that the tenant farmer condoned the poacher for ridding his farm of rabbits and pheasants which he legally could not do himself.

Hunting Pleasures: Attack and Defence

In 1872, reports on the evidence taken before the Game Law Committee of the House of Commons were published, resulting in the 1872 Act for the Protection of Certain Wild Birds During Breeding Season. This legislation was debated in the journals, and controversy was aroused over hunting pleasures and in particular over who should pay for them:

Landlords who keep game that injure the crops but afford sport to a few friends - who regard the life of a fox as of more importance than the well-being of a family - are.... certainly justified by custom and the common law in doing what they like with their own; but they.... are on that lower level of morality where duty is not known and consideration for others has no harbourage.

(38)

Eliza Lynn Linton spelt out "Our Duties" in the above for Cornhill readers in August 1873, and clearly showed her moral indignation. She felt that landowners should not have pleasure in hunting when it was paid for by a shortage in others' basic needs.

Frasers' anonymous article on the subject also centred an attack on the landowners:

No candid enquirer into this part of the subject can doubt that each head of game destroys far more than its own value, to say nothing of what it consumes; and just in proportion as Lord Malmesbury and other game preservers prove the production of wild animals to be large, do they at the same time prove the destruction of the food of the people to be great.

High farming and high preservation cannot go together. A man may take a farm and content himself with the natural yield of the land, loss from game being allowed for, when he lays out little or no capital of his own in augmenting its productiveness; but no one in his senses would employ his skill and capital in agricultural improvements, with an unknown quantity of hares and rabbits for partners in the increased produce his exertions might extract from the soil.

(39)

With a leisure interest in nature based exclusively on pleasure, as was the case with hunting, moral grounds obviously provided a good base from which to launch an attack. In return, an article in Quarterly defended hunting. The opening paragraph of "The Laws and Customs of Sport" gave a neat précis of the argument:

The question of the Preservation of Game is curiously interwoven with matters of political economy, of criminal statistics, of the growth of luxury and expenditure, of the pursuits and amusements of the people, of food supply and of natural history.

(40)

Although the above extract does not show any conscious recognition of a moral aspect of the debate, a retaliation to the attack on the privileged pleasures of hunting was indirectly given within the article. The writer felt that some of "the people" shared

the pleasures of the landowners, and felt able to speak for all hunters, even the less privileged ones without land:

They look, as all sensible men must do, on game preserving as a great fact, and on the enjoyment of sport as an enjoyment not peculiar to an aristocracy either by birth or of wealth, but shared by many thousands of the most useful classes of society, by the hard-worked lawyer, the anxious physician, the ingenious mechanic, the scheming and contriving engineer, the laborious and conscientious civil servant.

(41)

Unlike the aristocracy, the new hunters found their living in cities as the reference to their employment indicated. According to the anonymous writer, the landowner was not solely to blame for game preservation. He was only partly responsible, together with all the other hunters. In this way the fact that there were economic advantages to those privileged enough to own the hunting terrain was glossed over. By making "the people" hunters too, (and only citing those who were the most useful "people" for society) the moral argument was turned round so that the landowners were merely enjoying a national pleasure along with others. The hunters themselves paid for their pleasures as they were also "the people" in this reversal of the moral argument.

However, it was not only people who paid for the pleasure of the hunters. Their prey also paid. This was pointed out by Edward A. Freeman⁽⁴²⁾ in an article in Fortnightly, "The Morality of Field Sports". His article began a new debate on hunting, set round the issue of cruelty to animals.

This attack enraged hunter writers, especially Keibel and Trollope.⁽⁴³⁾ Fortnightly, true to its principles of a "free

and open debate", printed Trollope's reply, and then a rejoinder from Freeman⁽⁴⁴⁾ followed by a summing up of their exchange by Helen Taylor⁽⁴⁵⁾ in the issues which immediately followed Freeman's first onslaught. Once under attack, the pleasures of hunting were defended by merging the 'naturalness' of hunting with popular Darwinism, as was displayed by the writers on science in Chapter Four. Trollope found it easy to employ evolution to defend his pleasure:

Certainly, to those animals which come as yet least under man's influence, the bondage of bodily suffering is most severe. They hunt each other from day to day, and suffer the double agony of hunger and of bloody destruction. Seeing this is so, that the soft-hearted, rose-leaved, velvet life that Mr. Freeman would advise for animals is not in accordance with Nature. I cannot bring myself to feel that the fox suffers unworthily when he is done to death by a pack of hounds for the gratification of a hundred sportsmen.

(46)

The "struggle for existence" argument made it appear as if the "manly" writer on hunting knew, and was not afraid of, reality. Trollope presented himself, by the use of scientific objectivity, as a realist. Moreover, he was a 'natural' for he, as hunter, acted under the same impulses as the animals in the "struggle for existence". Freeman could then be condemned for being "soft-hearted" and the implication in "rose-leaved" is that he was seeing nature through rose tinted spectacles. This was not really the case. Freeman's attack did not evoke so velvety a life for animals as Trollope insinuated. Instead of being "soft-hearted", Freeman was probing privilege. He used the stick of inconsistency to beat the hunters and this lifted his argument above the sentimental. Legal inconsistencies were placed side by

side quite simply: if a dog was set on hares by the rich then there were no fines, but if a poor boy set a dog on a cat, he would be fined. If a calf or donkey was pursued, that was cruel, but to chase a deer was "noble". To harm a cat was a legal crime, but to harm a hare was a "gallant diversion". Freeman then dryly observed "They call hunting and shooting noble and manly sports".⁽⁴⁷⁾ Trollope claimed that man was an animal in his basic 'instincts' and felt this recognition of reality was sufficient reason for him to enjoy putting the fox to death "by a pack of hounds for the gratification of a hundred sportsmen", but Freeman's point was precisely opposed to that reasoning. He felt that man was more than an animal and that hunting should be seen as barbaric and not at all "noble and manly".

By employing the scientific view of nature and bringing men down to basics, Trollope avoided the charge of privilege in hunting. It is not surprising therefore that Freeman should have chosen the words "noble and manly" to give his attack point. The fact that they proved a successful element in his argument demonstrates their importance. They are not merely hack expressions, although of course that element is present in their use, but they are significant words for an understanding of the hunters' view of nature.

Hunting is traditionally practised by the privileged. To say that it is a "noble and manly" pursuit is to encapsulate both the privileged and the outdoor qualities (natural) required to make a hunter. Freeman wanted "peacefuller (sic) woods and brooks"⁽⁴⁸⁾ without the hullabaloo of the hunt or the shoot.

Kebbel's response was to incorporate into his articles lengthy paragraphs which defended sport against unspecified allegations of cruelty to animals. His defence was to accuse writers of "sentimental sympathy"⁽⁴⁹⁾ and he, too, extended his argument in favour of the pleasures of hunting into a Darwinian concept based on the natural. It was the "innate ferocity of mankind" which made people want to hunt. It was not only necessary to hunt in order to ward off the evils of "an artificial life"⁽⁵⁰⁾ but it was a good training ground for young men who might later be asked to fight (as officers) for their country:

War may be a mark of brutality. We have nothing to do with that. But while it exists we must be ready for it; and one of the best preparations for campaigning are the sports of the field. All men cannot, of course, have the benefit of such training; but let us not at least be such mad men as to grudge it to those who can, and to those who are to lead the others.

(51)

Kebbel concluded that sport maintained "the healthy balance of all the elements of our nature".⁽⁵²⁾ He did not intend to repress any of those elements in the name of morality. By showing hunting as a training ground for officers, he too made it appear as if hunting was therefore in the national interest. If the nation paid for the pleasures of an elite, they were repaid in time of war.

Poachers: Conflicting Images.

For all that hunting took place in the labourer's work area, little notice was taken of him by hunter writers.

The Idler's illustration (Fig. 4) "The Real and the Ideal" shows there might be a different view of hunting to that represented in quality journal writings. In the picture of the "real" the labourer is present, not as a participant, but humbly bowing his head as the riders file through the gate he has opened for them. No such awareness of the labourer existed in the articles in the quality journals and newspapers on hunting.

It is surprising that Kebbel and Jefferies did not include a non-poaching labourer in their hunting articles. After all, Jefferies was gaining a reputation as an authority on the labourer and Kebbel's most famous work was a lengthy study of him. It is clear that they looked at the location of hunting, its play area in nature, and did not see the labourer. The hunter, like the artist, appeared to be virtually alone in the landscape.

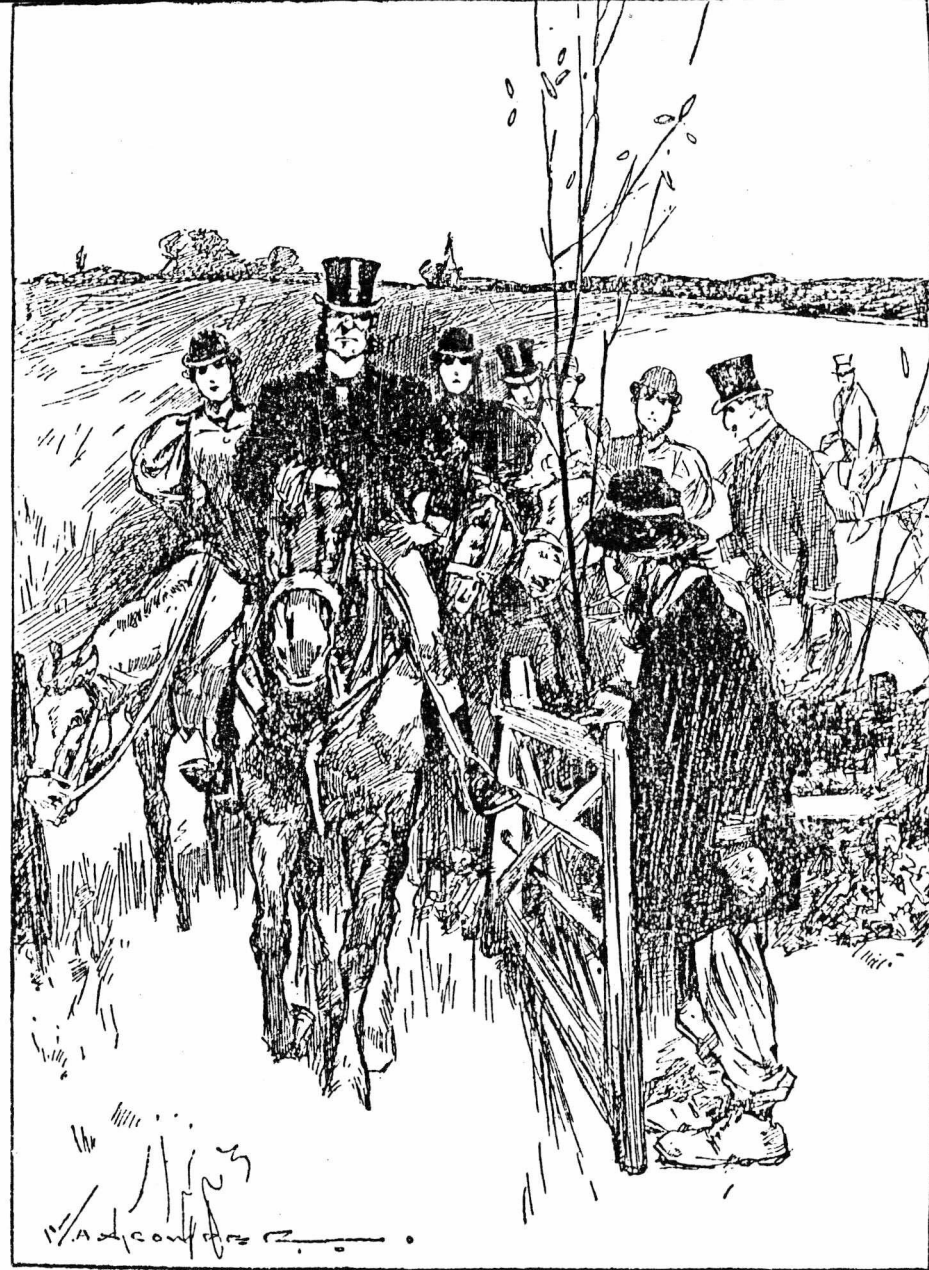
The hedonist view of nature did not include the labourer. He did not play a part in the pleasures to be found in hunting. Instead, it was the poacher who caught the full glare of publicity, for he spoilt some of the pleasures of hunting.

Labourers Turned Poachers.

Kebbel incorporated an attack on poaching in practically all his hunting articles. He disliked any suggestion that the poacher might be a labourer. The presentation of the poacher as a "starving peasant who snares a rabbit to get a meal for his sick wife" was one which Kebbel could not repudiate enough.



THE IDEAL. BY FRED PEGRAM.



THE REAL. BY MAX COWPER.

He knew such a presentation to be untrue "as all men well acquainted with country life know".⁽⁵³⁾ Despite his condemnation, this apocryphal image of the labourer-turned-poacher occurred regularly in articles on poachers. A.H. Beesley rephrased it, emphasising the helplessness of the labourer, in an article in Fortnightly:

A starving man who kills a hare on the high road which no man can identify or claim as his own, is, in the eye of the law, as much a criminal as if he had stolen one of the crown jewels.

(54)

The same story could be used against the labourer. H.W. Holland embellished it when he used it in his article in Argosy. "Besides if his wife is really dying, she wants something rather more digestible than roast pheasant and jugged hare".⁽⁵⁵⁾ To Holland, the story was a trumpery excuse ("if she was really dying") although it is a little confusing when he wished to deny starvation, to have the wife close to death. Of course such a situation also required the "snared rabbit" to be changed to "roast pheasant and jugged hare".

The mythical aspect of the story offended hunter writers, but they were not irritated by just the story. The poacher, as the hunter knew only too well, supplied game birds to a black market. If pheasants and partridges could be bought in the shops on the very day the season opened, then the pleasure of bringing home the first birds of the season was spoilt. Punch (See Figs. 5 & 6) showed inadequate hunters purchasing their birds from this illicit source, thus discrediting those who actually did hunt and kill the birds



RATHER SUSPICIOUS.

First Passenger. "HAD PRETTY GOOD SPORT?"

Second Passenger. "NO—VERY POOR. BIRDS WILD—RAIN IN TORRENTS—DOGS NO USE. 'ONLY GOT FIFTY BRACE!"

First Passenger. "'MAKE BIRDS DEAR, WON'T IT?"

Second Passenger ("off his guard"). "YOU'RE RIGHT. I ASSURE YOU I PAID THREE-AND-SIXPENCE A BRACE ALL ROUND AT NORWICH THIS MORNING!"



they brought home.

"Sentimental sympathy"

Kebbel chiefly accused novelists of propagating a "sentimental" poacher image, and fictional corroboration of this claim was found in Belgravia, which was a journal of short stories. Written in dialect and from the poacher's point of view, "The Poacher's Story" addressed reader and writer as "Sir":

Yes, sir, I'm married, but my wife has got rumatiz by field work and has half a crown a week from the parish. I'm a labourer, and earn 10 shillings a week, beside what I can make by poaching, perhaps four or five shillings more. I've two boys, 10 and 12. School sir? O no, they're worth five shillings a week to me. Better drop poaching? No, sir, I'm damned if I do.

(56)

The unknown interviewee was definitely a labourer as he himself claimed, but the anonymous author did not stress his poverty as a reason for taking up poaching. (Nor was the poacher criticised within the story for preventing his children from attending school). It was a sense of social injustice which led this particular fictionalised labourer to take up poaching:

I was a-wondering why you and me, Rooks, should have to sit in a ditch eating barley bread and skim dick, whilst Squire Dormer eats pheasants and lives like a fighting-cock? ... Wild animals was sent for the service of men; they was give to everybody, not the Squire.

(57)

Two individualised portraits of poachers, who were, it was claimed, the acquaintances of the writers, were given by Watson and Jefferies. Both these poachers were shown to be village inhabitants. Watson's poacher "the Otter" lived just outside the village, but did not appear to be a labourer, at least, not at the time when Watson 'knew' him. Watson's "Otter" featured in his article for Cornhill and in his book The Confessions of a Poacher.

Jefferies' "Oby", who was claimed by biographers and critics to be based on a real person,⁽⁵⁹⁾ was a part-time labourer. He worked in the fields on an irregular basis, principally to gain inside information, both of the local habits of the game birds and also of the keepers. Jefferies claimed that the poacher was not a thief, nor a tramp, nor even a drunkard. In spite of the latter claim, he introduced "Oby" to the readers as "an intoxicated man lying at full length in the road".⁽⁶⁰⁾ He told how he pulled the man out of the highway and into safety from the mail cart. Later "a labourer called, asking for me in a mysterious manner, and refusing to communicate his business to anyone else". It was "Oby", come to thank Jefferies and to give him "a couple of cock pheasants". "Oby" declared "I ain't forgot as you drawed I out of the raud thuck night". And thus, recorded Jefferies, "a species of acquaintanceship grew up". After telling the tale of "Oby's" poaching methods, Jefferies commented upon the good side of his character and of poachers in general. He claimed that the poacher had a useful role in rural society and gave instances of co-operation between poachers and farmers.

In contrast, Watson's poacher was a "Bohemian":

... a product of sleepy village life, and usually 'mouches' on the outskirts of country towns. His cottage is roughly adorned in fur and feather, and abuts on the fields. There is a fitness in this, and an appropriateness in the two giant lurchers stretched before the door.

(61)

His poacher was "versed in woodcraft ... coolly audacious" and a "naturalist":

His outdoor life has made him quick and taught him much ready animal ingenuity. He has imbibed an immense amount of knowledge of the life of the woods and fields, and is that one man in a thousand who has accuracy of eye and judgment sufficient to interpret nature aright.

(62)

Watson's article was emphatically on the side of the labourer/poacher.

Jefferies, in Gamekeeper at Home, confirmed the superiority of the poacher. He considered it suspicious if the labourers showed an interest in 'nature', but if they did, it was a sure sign to the keeper that they were poachers:

The keeper is particularly careful to observe the motions of labourers engaged in the fields; especially at luncheon time, when men with a hunk of bread and a slice of bacon ... are apt to ramble round the hedges, of course, with the most innocent of motives, admiring the beauties of nature.

As he passes and repasses a field where they are at work day after day, and understands

agricultural labour, he is aware that they have no necessity to visit hedgerows and mounds a hundred yards distant, and should he see anything of that kind the circle of his suspicions gradually narrows till he hits the exact spot and person.

(63)

Watson's country poacher was even more superior, for he was recognised by his air of "rustic romance" as well as his "marked intelligence". (64)

Kebbel's hunting articles always contained a serious condemnation of unspecified promoters and defenders of poaching. It was as if he felt he was attacking a vague and widely held myth rather than a specific set of opinions:

Next comes the drawback which is created by the crime of poaching - the murderous conflicts ... and the demoralisation of the peasantry of which it is said to be the cause... It is sometimes urged that if game were made property ... all sentimental sympathy with the poacher on the part of the public would then cease ... Robbed of all the moral support which it still partially derives from an ignorant prejudice on the subject, poaching would certainly diminish

(65)

Kebbel satirised their misinformed image of the poacher:

We may picture him to ourselves, if we like, lurking in some sequestered den - half cave, half cottage - built into the hillside, and protected by a spreading oak, and there will be no one to disturb our vision. We may imagine him a good sportsman, a self taught naturalist, sober, and, in his own eyes at least, honest and industrious. Last, but not least, let him stand six feet high, be a model of strength and activity, with a frank bold countenance, a merry blue eye, extremely white teeth, and a smile that would subdue a duchess.

(66)

He felt the above to be the poacher of the "golden age" propagated by "novelists" and founded on Robin Hood myths. The poacher of the "iron age" was a different man, if not men. Typically, Kebbel described their food as well as their appearance:

About twelve or one they enjoy a copious breakfast of beefsteaks, bacon and ale; and the afternoon is comfortably passed in smoking, dog-fighting, playing skittles, mending nets, and concocting fresh plans for the morrow. These sallow-faced, round-shouldered men, in dirty stockings, unlaced ankle-boots, knee-breeches, and velveteen jackets, who are to be seen lounging about the door of the most disreputable-looking public in any large straggling village or country town, are ten to one members of the fraternity aforesaid.

(67)

The problem for Kebbel and his fellow anti-poachers, lay in the fact that the poacher was also a hunter. He did not deny that similarity, but hoped to denigrate:

We have seen that poaching, to be successfully pursued, demands a combination of qualities decidedly above the average: courage, nerve, patience, great quickness of eye and ear, fertility of resource, and knowledge of the habits of game.

(68)

He tried to undercut this by adding "such qualities demand and fetch a good price" but they were the same qualities held by the hunter in Kebbel's articles. Clearly, it was difficult for all the writers to believe that the agricultural labourer held these qualities. It must be an above average labourer who became a poacher, or, in Kebbel's view, not a country person at all.

Poaching: Local or Gang?

A further problem for all writers on poaching and hunting lay in the kind of poaching they commented upon. There was gang poaching as well as poaching by individuals. The writers on hunting and poaching often seemed confused between the two distinct kinds. Sometimes they divided them up into ancient (individual) and modern (gang) in keeping with their hedonist enjoyment of nostalgia. Then the merging of the individual poacher with the hunter (as the poacher was a thing of the past) was far more acceptable. Most often the champions of poaching preferred not to think about gang poaching, with its violence to both wild life and gamekeepers, at all. Gang poaching tended to take away "sentimental sympathy" from the "starving labourer and his sick wife". Beesley would not allow that poaching only took place in gangs by "roughs", as if this had been suggested. "It is idle to suppose that poaching is confined to town gangs, who are ready to bludgeon gamekeepers to death in a pitched battle".⁽⁶⁹⁾ Beesley knew that gang poaching did exist and the terms "roughs" and "town gangs" show he felt they were city poachers. However, he could not support the idea that they were the only poachers, and obviously felt that gang poaching diverted attention away from his idea of the cause of poaching. He firmly believed that poaching was a symptom rather than a disease, and was a part of the "plight" of the labourer. .

Watson too felt that gang poaching existed but to him it was only an example of crude poaching. His local man was far too prudent to attempt any work which might meet violence from keepers:

It need hardly be said that pheasants are generally reared close to the keeper's cottage; that their coverts immediately surround it. Most commonly it is the gang of armed ruffians that enter these, and not the country poacher. And there are reasons for this. Opposition must always be anticipated, for the covert should never be, and is rarely, unwatched. This effected, and with birds in his possession, the poacher is liable to be indicted upon so many charges, each and all having heavy penalties.

(70)

Watson based his argument for city-based gang poaching on the evidence of local opposition.

Jefferies presented another view of gang poaching in his individualised portrait of "Oby". He claimed it was not done by city aliens, but by rural aliens. "Oby" called it "navigating", which Jefferies translated for the reader as "navvying":

There ain't no such chaps for poaching as they navigators in all England ... I've knowed forty of 'em go out together on a Sunday, and every man had a dog, and some two ... They used to spread out like, and sweep the fields as clean as the crown of your hat.

(71)

Of course, navvies in gangs could be city men, but they were also single (and homeless) agricultural workers. (72)

Although gang poaching was identified by the writers as a different kind of poaching, they did not consider that it sprang from a different cause to local poaching.

Myth and Romance

Kebbel felt that all poaching was theft and the ugly facts should be constantly put before the readers. He wrote in

the same style on poaching for the twenty years of his career in journalism. It was as if he felt his dogmatic statements did not convince and needed reiteration. Some of the pleasures of hunting were being spoilt by poaching, and the facts should be known:

The misfortune is that the halo of romance, which surrounded these celebrated characters Robin Hood and Alan-a-Dale descended through several generations to a class of marauders as vulgar, brutal and mercenary as the burglar who breaks into your pantry, and, if necessary, shoots the butler. The tradition, however, still survives; and those who know what poaching and poachers really are have hard work to contend against it.

(73)

Kebbel was obviously right to link the prevalence of sympathy, "sentimental" or not, with the myth of Robin Hood. The allure of the poacher was strongly connected with assumptions concerning nature and its inhabitants, as Kebbel himself revealed when he could not make his thoroughly bad poacher a country resident. There was, it seemed, a charm centred around poaching which no rhetoric nor bombast could destroy. Kebbel was not alone in his fight against the attractive myth of the poacher. Holland had also felt that there were myths to fight:

Stripped of the romance and false sentimentalism which had ridiculously accrued to their career, the life of a poacher is very dull, very stupid, and very miserable; and if the testimony of three poachers who have some little conscience is to be credited, they are sometimes so desparately wretched that as they wander solitarily through the woods, gun in hand, it is a debatable point whether they shall shoot the pheasants, the gamekeeper or themselves, so heavily does the burden of poverty, crime, degradation and ruin press upon them and torment them.

(74)

Although he claimed to have interviewed three poachers, Holland was not quite sure whether to believe them, but even if he had, he did not feel the reasons given deserving of sympathy. Despite the burdens of "poverty, crime, degradation and ruin", he felt they were wicked men.

Still the protest against romance continued. An article in Chambers in 1880 presented the case as if new:

Attempts are sometimes made to impart a degree of romance to the character of poachers. On the contrary, in our day at least, they are a good-for-nothing, idly disposed set of rascals, differing little from habitual thieves.

(75)

The Poacher as Political Activist

Jefferies offered a middle of the road version of the poacher, neither fully romantic, nor as ugly as the opponents might wish:

It is a popular belief that the village poacher is an idle, hang-dog ne'er-do-well, with a spice of sneaking romance in his disposition - the Bohemian of the hamlet, whose grain of genius has sprouted under difficulties, and produced weeds instead of wheat. This is a complete fallacy, in our day at least. Poaching is no longer an amusement, a thing to be indulged in because 'It's my delight of a shiny night in the season of the year'; but a hard, prosaic business, a matter of £sd requiring a long headed, shrewd fellow, with a power of silence, capable of delicacy of touch which almost raises poaching into a fine art. The real man is often a sober and to all appearance industrious individual, working steadily during the day at some handicraft in the village, as blacksmithing, hedge carpentering (ie making post and rails etc) (sic) cobbling, tinkering, or perhaps in the mill; a somewhat reserved solitary workman of superior intelligence and frequently advance views as to the 'rights of labour'. He has no appetite for thrilling adventure; his idea is simply money,

and he looks upon his night work
precisely as he does upon his day labour.

(76)

The "ne'er-do-well" and the "Bohemian" were both rejected by Jefferies but he did show a link with political protest and retained the image of the poacher being a more intelligent labourer than most. Watson, too, felt that political protest was a part of the motivation for poaching. Indeed, according to Watson "his life is one long protest against the Game Laws". His "Otter" was reputed to have said "it's a queer kind o' property that's yours in that field, mine on the turnpike, and a third man's over the next fence".(77)

It is however, difficult in individual examples (or creations) to find consistency. Jefferies, despite his generalisation on the link between poaching and protest, cited in "Oby" a poacher who did not appear to care about the Game Laws. Although an anecdote where "Oby" caught both the keeper and the local policeman at poaching was relayed by Jefferies, he also commented that "Oby" used the information for his own protection and made no political capital out of it.

Cockney Poachers

Jefferies' writings never quite fit comfortably into a category, and he presented poaching in different ways. Despite his alternative in "Oby" to the "ne'er-do-well" image, he also in one article, joined Kebbel in denouncing the poacher (in general terms) as a Londoner:

Moreover, the poacher of those days was, generally speaking, a humble and modest being compared with his successor. He skulked about in dread of the powers that be; he was regarded with an unkind eye not only by the magistrates, but by the more respectable of his neighbours; and he had to resort to mean and precarious methods for disposing of his game. The modern plunderer of game preserves has reverted to the best traditions of the Locksley school, and walks with bold and firm step - not upon the woodland glade, but upon the pavement of the East End or through the devious precincts of Seven Dials. Our improved system of communication has freed him from the inconvenient necessity of carrying on operations in a place where he was more known than respected, and enabled him to organise from a distance regular campaigns; while at the same time it is more easy for him to enter into offensive and defensive alliances with experiences and trustworthy 'pals'.

(78)

.....oOo.....

It would be a foolish and impossible task to look for the "real" poacher through the medium of the journals and newspapers, and yet, the writers claimed they were presenting the truth. Kebbel was prepared to bet "ten to one" on his reality, and Watson quoted his "field instances"⁽⁷⁹⁾ as if they were recorded on the spot from actual incidents. Jefferies could present equally detailed and plausible pictures of different poachers, each one supposed to represent all poachers.

From these conflicting images of the poacher a figure emerges who was a combination of the hunter, the naturalist and artist. He turned "poaching into a fine art"⁽⁸⁰⁾ and was a "Bohemian" living a 'natural' life in nature remote from others.

He had all the "instincts" of the hunter, all the knowledge of the naturalist, and all the misanthropy of the artist. This combination made the poacher glamorous enough, but the mythical aura surrounding him, not just in the Robin Hood myths but in contemporary apocryphal stories concerning his motives and his death⁽⁸¹⁾ added an imaginative dimension to that figure. It was no wonder that Kebbel as chief representative of the writers who wished to dispel this glamour, felt powerless. Hence his constant forceful presentation of an alternative, unglamorous figure, and his attacks on unnamed antagonists who were only seen vaguely as "novelists". Those writers who felt the poacher was an "ideal" figure were glad of his presence, but not as a labourer. Those like Kebbel who saw an alternative figure, again felt he was not a labourer but an alien from the city.

Perhaps the most revealing feature of these various views of the poacher and one which confirms that they are based on leisure interests in nature rather than the "reality" claimed, is the absence of any political action on the part of the poachers shown. Although it is claimed by those who preferred the "ideal" image that he was opposed to the Game Laws, there is no sense that the "ideal" poacher was opposed to the writers and readers in any way. Only Kebbel felt the alien quality of the poacher, as someone in opposition to himself, and he accounted for this by making the poacher 'unnatural' and from the metropolis. Only one⁽⁸²⁾ of the "Confessions" of poachers showed the poacher as politically active enough to shoot foxes. Such an act was unsporting, as Punch exposed (Fig. 7) and showed opposition to the values upheld in the quality press. Even Kebbel did not suppose his villanous poacher would do such a thing, and the

"ideal" poacher was too much a friend of his various journalists to contemplate it.

The hedonist view of nature, shown in the pleasures of hunting, is the third and last of the leisure interests in nature to be discussed. Various aspects of the hedonist view mark it out clearly from the aesthetic and scientific views. It claims, for instance, to be the most natural of all the leisure activities promoted by the quality journals and enjoyed by its readers.

The physicality, the "manly" tone, the "chaff" and excitement have all been described and illustrated and all point to its unique view. The placement of hunting articles during the year properly spells out the importance given to it by editors, and their awareness of its popularity.

Another factor makes it even more distinct from the two foregoing interests. For the hedonist view of nature shows the impact of changes in nature, which inevitably were changing the enjoyment in this leisure interest. Manifestly, hunters and writers on hunting objected to changes in agriculture and legislation which spoilt their pleasures. No other view is so much subject to attack. The result is both nostalgia, present in the idealisation of the hunter, and, despite the contradiction, the romanticisation of the poacher.

As has been shown, the writers all held strong opinions on the subject of poachers, and they were all different. More than this, their opinions seem to be at variance with the views of others who were only seen vaguely. Debates have been described, and they point to confusion outside the "magic circle" where legislation,



“EVERY EXCUSE.”

Brigson (excited). “HULLO!—THERE GOES A —”

His Host (clutching his arm). “GOOD HEAVENS!—YOU’RE NOT GOING TO SHOOT THAT FOX?”

[*Ups with his gun!*]

Brigson. “MY DEAR F’LLER! WH’-WH’-WHY NOT? THIS IS THE LAST DAY I SHALL HAVE THIS SEASON—AND I—I FEEL AS IF I COULD SHOOT MY OWN MOTHER-IN-LAW—IF SHE ROSE!”

Figure 5:7

myths, novels and new methods of farming all offered a confusion of information. Under the impact of these disturbing new changes the hedonist view of nature found its pleasures under attack. Hence the attempts to deny privilege and to present this leisure activity as open to middle class city people.

The attacks on hunting which were based on unfairness to tenant farmers, and on cruelty to animals were difficult matters in themselves, and the defenders of hunting were forced to borrow the new arguments from popular Darwinism in order to adequately reply. These plausible rationalisations could not be applied to the poacher. For once, the figure in the landscape who spoilt a leisure interest had defenders.

The writers on hunting showed no noticeable contact with the labourers during the enjoyment of the hunt, and as they believed it required their own superior skills to poach, they were unable to counter attack strongly. The fact was that, poaching did exist, both locally, by individuals and collectively by gangs who employed brutal methods. This was known by the readers and writers, although they did not appear to recognise that their appetite for hunting, and the exclusivity of game as a 'luxury' product, created a lucrative black market. The labourer was obviously the local poacher; no one else but the labourer would be so familiar with the habits of game. No doubt migrant labourers were also involved in gang poaching too.

Neither the defenders of poachers nor those who struggled to present an ugly counter-image wished to make this obvious deduction. The labourer was protected from blame by the unflattering image of his slow bovine nature. Even those who felt the labourer had been forced into poaching seemed to feel that a starving man, or a man with a sick wife, could miraculously find the skill and enterprise to poach under the influence of an occasional necessity. They saw poaching as part of the "plight" of the labourer, and excused it and did not look too closely at an ability which must have been acquired by practise as well as necessity. The ideal poacher image was then countered by the image of a city-bred criminal (for he traditionally had the sharp wits they recognised as necessary for poaching) and the labourer was again left out of the view.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Five

- (1) Representative examples include:
 Cornish, G.J. "North Norfolk Fish and Fowl" Cornhill Mar. 1899 pp. 321-323
 Watkins, M.G. "Trout and Trout Fishing" Quarterly Oct. 1875 pp. 334-367
 Sirion. "A Hampshire Trout" National Apr. 1884 pp. 172-185
 Bromley-Davenport, W. "Salmon Fishing" 19th Century 1883 pp. 402-413
 Watkins, M.G. "The Angler's Library" Edinburgh Jul. 1883 pp. 152-170
 Watkins, M.G. "Autumnal Trout Fishing in the Lincolnshire Wolds" Cornhill Nov. 1872 pp. 584-594
 Watkins, M.G. "The Fly Fisher in Winter Quarters" Cornhill Apr. 1873 pp. 436-446
 Macbeth, J.D. "Angling" Cornhill 1869 pp. 417-425
 Bertram, J.G. "On Fishing" St Pauls Jun. 1868 pp. 330-346
 Watson, J. "Water Poachers" 19th Century Oct. 1889 pp. 695-709
 Watson, J. "Salmon and its Kin" Cornhill Dec. 1895 pp. 614-623
 Shand, A.I. "Fishing and Fishing Literature" Blackwoods Jul. 1883 pp. 102-116
- (2) Representative examples include"
 Anon. "The Hunting Farmer" Pall Mall Feb. 23 1865 pp. 2-3
 Anon. "The Master of Hounds" Pall Mall Mar. 15 1865 p. 3
 Anon. "The Man Who Hunts and Doesn't Like it" Pall Mall Feb. 9 1865 p. 3
 Anon. "The Man Who Hunts and Does Like It" Pall Mall Feb. 16 1865 p. 3
 Anon. "The Man Who Hunts and Never Jumps" Pall Mall Mar. 7 1865 p. 9
 Trollope, A. "About Hunting Part I" St Pauls Nov. 1867 pp. 209-219
 Trollope, A. "About Hunting Part II" St Pauls Mar. 1868 pp. 675-690
- (3) Freeman, G.E. "Modern Falconry" Cornhill May 1865 pp. 615-27
- (4) Although there were female hunters, mostly fox hunters, the writers always wrote as 'man to man'.
- (5) T.E. Kebbel (1827-1917) journalist. Kebbel contributed 57 articles to Blackwoods, 2 to Edinburgh, 26 to Cornhill 21 to Quarterly, 15 to Fortnightly, 8 to Fraser's, 29 to National, 16 to 19th Century and 1 to Temple Bar all concerned with hunting and rural life.

- (6) John Watson (d. 1928) JP and writer on sport. Watson contributed to Blackwoods, Macmillans, National, Cornhill and 19th Century.
- (7) Kebbel presented "The Agricultural Labourer" in two parts in Cornhill in Feb. and Mar. 1873. The full book was published in 1870 with reprints in 1887, 1893 and 1907.
- (8) Jefferies, R. "Partridges in 1880" St James Jan. 29 1880 p. 6
- (9) Jefferies, R. "Pheasant Breeding" St James Oct. 3 1882 p. 6
- (10) Jefferies, R. "The Prospects of the First" St James Sep. 1 1882 p. 6
- (11) Jefferies, R. "Rabbit Shooting" St James Feb. 3 1882 p. 6
- (12) Jefferies, R. "Wild Fowling" St James Dec 4 1885 p. 6
- (13) Jefferies, R. "Rook Shooting" St James May 9 1882 p. 6
- (14) Jefferies, St James, Feb. 3 1882, p. 6 op.cit.
- (15) Jefferies, R. "Partridge Hatching Season" St James Jun. 27 1883 p. 6
- (16) Kebbel, T.E. "Partridge Shooting" Cornhill Sep. 1864 pp. 332-3
- (17) Jefferies, St James, Feb. 3 1882, p. 6 op.cit.
- (18) Kebbel, T.E. "Winter Shooting" Cornhill Feb. 1865 p. 238
- (19) ibid. p. 237
- (20) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1864, p. 338 op.cit.
- (21) Kebbel, T.E. "First of September" Cornhill Sep. 1876 pp. 307-315
- (22) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1865, p. 238 op.cit.
- (23) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1864, p. 338 op.cit.
- (24) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1876, p. 331 op.cit.
- (25) ibid. p. 331
- (26) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1864, p. 338 op.cit.
- (27) It is autumn, a season when Jefferies felt the trees reached their "fullness" of beauty. c.f. Chapter Three

- (28) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1865, p. 237 op.cit.
- (29) ibid. p. 239
- (30) ibid. p. 240
- (31) Alexander Innes Shand (1832-1907) journalist and critic. Shand was a lawyer who became a journalist in 1867 for The Times, Saturday and Blackwoods. He was a prolific writer and contributed 98 articles to Blackwoods alone. He also wrote for Cornhill, Edinburgh, Quarterly, Fortnightly and National. He was in the "magic circle" being friends with George Smith, George Meredith and Laurence Oliphant.
- (32) Shand, A.I. "The Moors" Cornhill Aug. 1871 p. 225
- (33) ibid. p. 225
- (34) ibid. p. 231
- (35) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1865, p. 237 op.cit.
- (36) "Shirley" (John Skelton) "Mr Ruskin at the Seaside" Fraser's Dec. 1860 p. 719 in this frivolous review of Ruskin "Shirley's" mind wanders from the book to hunting.
- (37) The Tenant Right agitation used pamphlets rather than the journals for its expression. For example: Sewell, J.W. and Brant, W. A New Rental and Tenancy Scheme Affecting Agricultural Land (no date) An Agriculturalist. The Tenant Right Bill Apr. 12 1873
 Fowler, R. Limited Ownership of Land, Remarks on the Report of the Committee of the House of Lords on Improvement of Land 1873
 Marquis of Hartley, President of Peterborough Chamber of Agriculture. Land Tenure and Compensation for Unexhausted Improvements in Land Oct. 1872
 James Howard MP contributed two pamphlets: The Tenant Farmer: Land Laws and Landlords 1879
A Paper on Impediments to the Development of British Husbandry delivered at a meeting of the Bedfordshire Agricultural Society Jan. 31st 1873
 James Howard's 1872 Bill failed.
- (38) Linton, E.L. "Our Duties" Cornhill Aug. 1873 p. 223
- (39) Anon. "Our Food Supply and the Game laws" Fraser's Aug. 1873 p. 136 and p. 140
- (40) Anon. "The Laws and Customs of Sport" Quarterly Jan. 1873 p. 29
- (41) ibid. p. 31
- (42) Freeman, E.A. "The Morality of Field Sports" Fortnightly Oct. 1870 pp. 385-353

- (43) Trollope answered the attack "Mr Freeman and the Morality of the Hunt" Fortnightly Dec. 1869 pp. 616-625
- (44) Freeman, E.A. "The Controversy of Field Sports" Fortnightly Dec. 1870 pp. 674-691
- (45) Taylor, H. "A Few Words on Mr Trollope's Defence of Hunting" Fortnightly Jan. 1870 pp. 63-68
- (46) Trollope, Fortnightly, 1869, p. 616 op.cit.
- (47) Freeman, Fortnightly, 1870, p. 353 op.cit.
- (48) ibid. p. 353
- (49) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1876, p. 313 op.cit.
- (50) ibid. p. 315
- (51) ibid. p. 315
- (52) ibid. p. 315
- (53) Kebbel, T.E. "Poaching" Cornhill Sep. 1867 p. 347
- (54) Beesley, A.H. "The Game Laws and the Committee of 1872" Fortnightly Mar. 1873 p. 352
- (55) Holland, H.W. "Poachers and Poaching" Argosy Nov. 1866 p. 402
- (56) Anon. "The Poacher's Story" Belgravia Sep. 1873 p. 251
- (57) ibid. p. 252
- (58) Watson, J. "Poachers and Poaching" Cornhill Feb. 1888 pp. 178-195
Watson, J. Confessions of a Poacher London 1890
- (59) c.f. Thomas, E. Richard Jefferies Chapter IX "The First Country Books" pp. 113-136 in the London 1978 edition, where he accepts Oby as drawn from life.
- (60) Jefferies, R. The Amateur Poacher Chapter VII "Oby and his System; The Moucher's Calendar" pp. 115-136 in London 1973 edition.
- (61) Watson, Cornhill, 1888, p. 178 op.cit.
- (62) ibid. pp. 181-2
- (63) Jefferies, R. The Gamekeeper at Home; or Sketches of Natural History and Rural Life Chapter VIII "The Field Detective - Fish Poaching" pp. 166-192 in London 1889 edition.

- (64) Watson, Cornhill, 1888, pp. 189-190 op.cit.
- (65) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1876, pp. 313-4 op.cit.
- (66) Kebbel, Cornhill, 1867, p. 347 op.cit.
- (67) ibid. p. 349
- (68) ibid. pp. 349-50
- (69) Beesley, Fortnightly, 1873 p. 354 , op.cit.
- (70) Watson, Cornhill, 1888, p. 188 op.cit.
- (71) Jefferies, Poacher, p. 117 op.cit.
- (72) They could also be Irish workers, who were considered by the farmers of East Anglia to be possible replacement labour for their own unionised men during the 1874 strike and lockout.
- (73) Kebbel, T.E. "Poaching" Quarterly Oct. 1891 p. 366
- (74) Holland, Argosy, 1866, p. 400 op.cit.
- (75) Anon. "Poachers and Poaching" Chambers Sep. 18 1880 p. 593
- (76) Jefferies, Gamekeeper, pp. 142-3 op.cit.
- (77) Watson, Cornhill, 1888, pp. 191-2 op.cit. He employed the same phrase in Confessions too.
- (78) Jefferies, R. "The Preservation of Game in England" St James Oct. 25 1881 p. 12
- (79) A phrase used by both Jefferies and Watson.
- (80) Another phrase employed by them both.
- (81) Again, both Jefferies and Watson described the death of the poacher in the same way. Pursued by keepers he finds a resting place near the lime kiln, lies down to sleep and rolls onto the stones and so dies.
- (82) Christian, G.(ed) James Hawkes Journal, A Victorian Poacher Oxford 1961

III:i

The previous section of this work has been confined to the presentation of three leisure interests in nature enjoyed by relatively wealthy city residents. The writers of the articles, and the journals which published them, were all London based. They spoke to families and to men of influence who looked to nature as the arena for their off-duty recreation. The readers were expected to have, or assumed to share, regular access to the country where they would enjoy their aesthetic, scientific or sporting interests. The writers presented themselves to the readers as urban eye-witnesses of country life. They assumed that their readers would also be visitors to the country, who would, after their visits, retire to their city drawing rooms (the proper home of the 'quality' journal) and there discuss the latest fashionable leisure interests well informed by their favourite periodical.

There was also a leisure interest which was the prerequisite of country residents who held a similar status to the city readers of the quality journals. The "gentry" which included the vicar and schoolmaster⁽¹⁾ as well as the squire and any prosperous tenant farmer neighbours⁽²⁾ represented the quality of the village. They, and especially their women folk, had a leisure interest in charity.

It is well known that visiting the country poor and sick by young and well-to-do women is a common feature of 19th century novels. From Austin until James, every novel set in the country showed charity as a regular occupation for women of quality. The journals, being city based, did not reflect this particular leisure interest directly. Caring for the local poor was not an activity which was transferred from country to city. It remained a "natural" part of living in the country and ceased once the same family moved to the city. The 'naturalness' of the rural based leisure interest in charity is illustrated by Mrs Gaskell in North and South. The heroine of that novel found she had to curtail her charitable activities once she moved from country to city; the poor in the industrial city were not so humble as those in the village. Margaret Hale could not just call on the poor and the sick, but must wait for acceptance and an invitation.⁽³⁾

In 1874 the year of the great agricultural strike and lockout, an article on charitable work was published in the October issue of Cornhill. There D.C. Lathbury criticised this female-dominated hobby:

... if she lives in the country and has time to spare, perhaps even has time on her hands, she takes to district visiting and Sunday-school teaching as naturally as to long frocks and dining late. Even if she is only in the country for part of the year, she expects to have her work found for her as soon as she arrives. Indeed, she would lose the esteem of her right-minded friends if she expected anything else.

It is taken for granted that she is qualified to deal with every form of distress and poverty, because she has the kind heart with which all women are credited in right of their sex. No one seems to imagine that good intentions, and that natural and amiable vanity which is pleased with the consciousness of giving pleasure, may not be a sufficient equipment for dealing with cases of individual distress, involving perhaps social problems of the utmost complexity.

(4)

This is a surprisingly harsh statement to read in a quality journal, but it well illustrates the social acceptance of the rural based leisure interest in charity. Lathbury showed no mercy to the young ladies, or the gentry:

Ever since the monasteries were dissolved the English gentry have been more or less looking after the poor, and it would be hard to say in what the poor have been better for it. On the contrary, in proportion as they have been out of the range of charitable attention they have risen above the need for it. Nowhere has English benevolence had so free a course as in the agricultural villages, and nowhere has it been so little glorified.

(5)

Lathbury then cited manufacturing towns where charitable work had become "completely distanced" and claimed that there was hope for the future of the working classes in this distance. His attack on rural based benevolence is detailed:

When a wealthy and educated class interests itself in the well being of a poor ignorant class, three results may be expected to follow. In the first place there ought to be a visible improvement in the material condition of the poor. In the next place they ought to be better taught. In the third place they ought to be more kindly disposed towards the class which has stood as their friends. Are these the consequences to be seen in those agricultural villages in which more than in any other parts of the country there has been systematic supervision of the poor by the rich?

(6)

As the tone of his question suggests, the answer is no. That negative was not spelt out for the reader by Lathbury, for he claimed that the "controversies growing out of the conflict between farmers and labourers have furnished an answer". Instead of restating that answer he gave a long list of the information known to his readers from this conflict:

The condition of the peasantry has been closely observed. We know the sort of houses in which they live. We know what kind of provision they have made for old age. We know how long their children attend school, and what are the causes which keep them away from school. We know what amount of gratitude they feel to the squire and the squire's family.

(7)

He does not feel he has to spell out the knowledge, so well acquainted are the readers with rural distress. Lathbury's main attack on the gentry's benevolence rested on his sense that it was not benevolence at all. The labourers should have been helped to move to higher paying areas where labour was short, instead of having their wages supplemented by charity.

III:v

Their children should have been encouraged to stay on at school and the economic reasons for their removal (the farmers offering the work, the labourers needing the money) should have been investigated and remedied. He condemned the gentry for creating poverty instead of self-help.

The exclusive interest in the agricultural labourer, the "plight of the agricultural labourer" as it was phrased, began in the late 1860s. It was from this area of current affairs in the journals' content that the "knowledge" claimed for readers by Lathbury, came. The rural based interest in charity was presented in the city based quality press in a general way as part of commentary on agricultural changes. However, because of the gentry's interest in the labourer, his "plight" was given more coverage than that of the tenant farmer for instance.⁽⁸⁾ Indeed the word "plight" was not applied to tenant farmers, even though the agricultural depressions during 1859-1900 made life hard for tenant farmers. "Plight" is a term used to describe a state worthy of charity, or charitable intention, in this context.

The pioneers who first wrote on the labourer, wrote from the country to The Times. Their motives were more than charitable, they were Christian. The letter column of The Times was the first platform for a campaign for better housing for agricultural workers, but the journals were not far behind in giving space to this important new interest.

Canon Girdlestone was an important figure in the "plight of the agricultural labourer" and he claimed that he was also a "Friend" to the agricultural labourer. His work is discussed in Chapter Seven, together with other rural clergymen who also claimed the same title. One of Girdlestone's early articles for the journals appeared in Frasers in December 1868 entitled "Landowners, Land and Those Who Till It". That title summarises the main problem for writers on the "plight" of the labourer. Actions on behalf of the labourer necessarily came up against the "Land Question",⁽⁹⁾ and landowners. A number of the latter entered into journal writing themselves⁽¹⁰⁾ for the first time as a result of the focus of interest upon those who tilled their land, and the adverse light the controversy threw upon landowners. Unionisation of the agricultural labourers, and their strikes of course drew more coverage in the newspapers and journals. During 1872-1874 a high percentage of current affairs articles in the quality journals were given over to these two "problems".

The campaign for proper cottages was a less controversial topic than taking sides on unionisation. It was displaced by the interest in the unions, but it remained a discussion point, and a charitable interest, after the 1874 strike and lockout had broken the back of the labourers' unions. Ten years later, when the extension of the franchise included the labourers, a more political interest was again revived in the journals, but because of the Agricultural Unions' own strong link with the Liberal Party at that date, the debate was far more concerned with party politics than with the labourers direct.

III:vii

The opening two chapters of this third section explore writings in the newspapers and journals on the labourer who is in sharp focus for the first time. The writers, unlike those in the preceding section, were all writing from the country presenting themselves as men on-the-spot. The first, Chapter Six, covers the great 1874 strike and lockout. The second, Chapter Seven, explores the writings and in one case, the actions, of four rural Church of England clergymen who spoke in the journals and newspapers on behalf of the labourer.

In 1874, D.C. Lathbury claimed that "everyone knew all about the labourer". Chapters Six and Seven show the ways in which that "knowledge" was presented to the readers in the 'quality' press. Chapter Eight shows the application and extent of that "knowledge" in reviews of Adam Bede and Far From the Madding Crowd when writers sought to measure the 'truth' of fictional labourers. Chapter Nine concludes this section with a study of the work of Richard Jefferies who was considered by his contemporaries to hold expert "knowledge" of the labourers.

FOOTONES: Section III

- (1) c.f. Allen, D.A. The Naturalist in Britain London 1976 p. 187
- (2) c.f. Jefferies, R. Hodge and his Masters London 1880 and Chapter Nine of this work.
- (3) Gaskell, E. North and South c.f. Chapter 8 "Home Sickness" Household Words Sep. 30 1854 p. 160
- (4) Lathbury, D.C. "Women and Charitable Work" Cornhill Oct. 1874 p. 417
- (5) ibid. p. 418
- (6) ibid. p. 418
- (7) ibid. p. 418
- (8) c.f. Chapter Five Fn. (37) for the pamphlets produced by the tenant right agitation. The following shows something of the extent of journal writing on the subject of the labourer and the farmer.

Stratton, F.J. "The Life of a Farm Labourer" Cornhill Feb. 1864 pp. 178-186

Anon. "The Agricultural Strike" Frasers Jun. 1872 pp. 651-666

Bear, W.E. "The Strike of the Farm Labourers" Fortnightly Jul. 1872 pp. 76-88

Smith, G. "The Labour Movement" Contemporary Jan. 1873 pp. 226-251

An Artisan. "Present Aspects of the Labour Question" Frasers May 1873 pp. 597-604

Anon. "The Agricultural Labourers' Union" London Quarterly Jul. 1873 pp. 327-346

Evershed, H. "Farm Labourers and Cow Plots" Fortnightly Jul. 1873 pp. 79-86

Jefferies, R. "The Future of Farming" Frasers Dec. 1873 pp. 687-692

Curley, E.A. "The Threatened Exodus of Agricultural Labourers" Fortnightly Apr. 1874 pp. 517-533

Jefferies, R. "The Power of the Farmers" Fortnightly Jun. 1874 pp. 808-816

Cross, J.W. "The Future of the Agricultural Labourers Emigration" Frasers Jun. 1874 pp. 100-111

Anon. "Sussex Cottages" Frasers Jun. 1874 pp. 752-774

Wilson, J. "The Labour-Movement, Abroad and at Home" Quarterly Jul. 1874 pp. 159-189

Cox, C.J. "Power of the Labourers" Fortnightly Jul. 1874 pp. 120-132

Jefferies, R. "The Farmer at Home" Frasers Aug. 1874 pp. 135-152

Cowell, H. "The Agricultural Strike" Blackwoods Aug. 1874 pp. 233-248

Wilson, A.J. "Agricultural Unionism" Macmillans Sep. 1874 pp. 449-454

Hardcastle, J.A. "East Anglia, its Strikes and Lockouts" Quarterly Oct. 1874 pp. 493-514

- Jefferies, R. "The Labourer's Daily Life" Fraser's Nov. 1874 pp. 654-669
- Arnold, A. "The Agricultural Strikes" Fraser's Dec. 1874 pp. 767-776
- Stanhope, E. "The Agricultural Labourers of England" Edinburgh Jan. 1875 pp. 126-149
- Jefferies, R. "Field Faring Women" Fraser's Sep. 1875 pp. 382-394
- Clifford, F.E. "The Labour Bill in Farming" Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England XI 1875
- Jefferies, R. "High Pressure Agriculture" Fraser's Aug. 1876 pp. 193-199
- Froude, J.A. "On the Uses of a Landed Gentry" Fraser's Dec. 1876 pp. 671-685
- Jefferies, R. "Unequal Agriculture" Fraser's May 1877 pp. 622-628
- Arch, J. "The Labourers and the Vote" 19th Century Jan. 1878 pp. 48-52
- Jefferies, R. "A Great Agricultural Problem" Fraser's Mar. 1878 pp. 365-373
- Shand, A.I. "Landlords, Tenants and Labourers" Edinburgh Jul. 1880 pp. 139-169
- 'Hodge'. "Gaffer Hodge, His Thoughts" National May 1883 p. 362
- Stubbs, C.W. "Village Politics" Good Words May 1883 pp. 302-308
- Lord Salisbury, "English Tenant Right" National Jun. 1883 pp. 624-632
- 'Hodge'. "Gaffer Hodge on the Extension of the Franchise" National Aug. 1883 pp. 824-5
- Austin, A. "Rich Men's Dwellings, a proposed Remedy for Social Discontent" National Dec. 1883 pp. 462-477
- Hall, T. "The Rural Boroughs" National May 1884 pp. 373-385
- Farrar, F.W. "Lord Bramwell on Drink: a Reply" 19th Century May 1885 pp. 869-878
- Farrar, F.W. "Drink: a last word to Lord Bramwell" 19th Century Jul. 1885 pp. 78-87
- Tuckwell, W. "Village Life and Politics in France and England" Contemporary Mar. 1892 pp. 397-407
- Arch, J. "Lords and Labourers" New Feb. 1893 pp. 129-138
- see also the writers in Chapter Seven.

- (9) A common abbreviation used by both sides in the debate on the redistribution of land.
- (10) Lord Salisbury. "Labourers and Artisans' Dwellings" National Dec. 1883 pp. 301-316
- Earl of Caernarvon. "Letters by Ruricola" National Feb. 1884 pp. 762-770
- Lord Bramwell. "Drink" 19th Century May 1885 pp. 878-882
- Viscount Lynton. "Richard Jefferies and the Open Air" National Oct. 1887 pp. 242-250

CHAPTER SIX

Facts

The 1874 Strike and Lockout.

The lockout was first reported in The Times on April 2nd, 1874. The strike in parts of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk around Newmarket commenced at the end of February when a request for a shilling a week rise from unionised labour was refused. The first lockout called in that area alone in direct response to the strike began on 10th March. The men were given one week's notice of the lockout which would continue until the strike ceased. These early beginnings in the dispute were spontaneous and did not display tactical behaviour on the part of the farmers. The numbers of labourers affected were about 1,500 to 2,000. The dispute lasted thirty weeks and ended in victory to the farmers.

Frederick Clifford⁽¹⁾ was a correspondent to The Times. He was sent to the eastern counties in early April and remained there for the duration of the dispute. The following is an analysis of his response to the relatively new situation of unionised rural discontent.

.....00o.....

In a rural labour dispute nature itself - the seasons, the weather, the kinds of farming conducted - affect the need for labour and so play an important part in the course of events. Contemporary accounts of and comments upon the 1874 labour dispute in the eastern counties revealed a lack of knowledge of the importance of the natural setting to the event they described. No-one, neither the Radicals backing the labourers' unions⁽²⁾ nor the union leaders themselves,

considered that to call a "lockout" in March, on the completion of spring sowing when a lull in vital activities followed, might be itself a political tactic. The commentators in the city press were out of touch with the natural calendar and did not realise the significance of March, or June and July. Just names on a calendar to them, to the eastern farmers and labourers they meant spring sowing, hay and wheat harvest respectively.

Therefore to call a lockout in March, after spring sowing, meant the year's cycle had been started and a lull could ensue, without labour, until harvest times. Supporters of the unions ignored the significance of the time the lockout was called, while defending themselves against the moral (not political) 'crime' of claiming the right to strike even at harvest, if necessary. A similar lack of knowledge occurred concerning the refusal of Norfolk farmers to join their neighbouring counties Defence Leagues and call a lockout. Only Clifford (and then only after he had been in East Anglia for several weeks) put together their reluctance with the information that the soil of Norfolk was heavier than Suffolk and Lincolnshire. The difference in soil made a difference to the agriculture, and Norfolk farmers concentrated more on root crops than cereal crops. As a consequence, their kind of farming needed more all year round attention - and labour - than their neighbouring counties. Nature was the unrecognised tactician advising the farmers.

It took some time before the commentators perceived that haysel⁽³⁾ and harvest were going to be significant moments when the strike or the lockout might be broken, for the farmers would need labour at that point. The seasons therefore dictated the length of the

dispute. That most unpredictable natural element, the weather, worked against the unions, and the dry summer of 1874 produced a meagre harvest (doubtless assisted by the labour shortage and the unskilled quality of the 'scab' labour employed by the farmers) and it was adequately brought in without unionised labour.

The full significance of the part the natural world played in the disputes was not initially observed by the press. Instead they tried to apply the readily available language from urban and industrial disputes to a rural setting. The effect of this confusion, and the way in which one individual writer overcame it, is dramatically shown in the columns of The Times.

Clifford used the phrase "The Agricultural Lockout" to head his reports in The Times in opposition to the phrase "Revolt of the Field" employed by the union press. The two phrases represent differing political allegiances, in that "revolt" describes the event from the union side, and "lockout" from the farmers. But how could you lock labour out of a field? It is possible to lock out labour when the work area is a building, just as it is possible to close down shops and industries, but a farm is a different matter.

The term "lockout" is a misapplied urban industrial word. It does not fit the situation. The difficulty of the word was a part of the debate in The Times but it was constantly reiterated that no other word was available. After the 1860 building strike in London, the word "lockout" became a part of common usage as the counterpart or correlative of "strike". Letters to The Times pointed out the difficulty:

A farm cannot be shut up like a manufactory. You may lock men out of a cotton mill, stop the engines, turn the key, and find things as you left them when you begin again. Not so with land. That will go on producing either food or weeds.

(4)

The writer, who gave the address "The Rectory, St George's in the East" (London), claimed to have first-hand knowledge of the area of the dispute. He was a "Suffolk man, born and bred" and he pleaded from his intimate knowledge for arbitration. Unless a settlement was reached, he warned, the labourers would emigrate. His language is interesting, for he referred to the events in Suffolk, as well as the economic principles of the time, in images drawn from nature. Referring to the "tide of unionism" and its "flow", he objected to the men being locked out and turned "adrift":

Suffolk, of course, shares the Conservative tradition of an agricultural county, and as we live in a corner it has taken some time for the tide of unionism to flow into our angle of England. But the tide has come and a large number of labourers have hailed it with an eagerness which has dissipated the belief in their docility lately cherished by their employers.

(5)

Although the writer has pointed out that the labourer was not as docile as was thought, that odd image of the labourer, waiting, waving, for the tide to come his way, does promote the idea that the passive labourer could have been literally overtaken by events beyond his control. The writer did not object to unionisation but represented it as something unstoppable and inevitable, perhaps

even natural as his language indicates. Similarly, "the law of supply and demand" was evoked by him as if it were a natural law:

The nature of the unions is not so much to the point. It aims at raising of the labourers' wages and these must ultimately be ruled by the law of supply and demand. (6)

It is a law which must "ultimately" prevail and as that word indicates, it cannot be prevented. For this reason the writer objected to a lockout. He asked "cannot the law of supply and demand be allowed to act without violent disturbance...?"⁽⁷⁾ The use of rhetoric heightens his sense that this law should not be tampered with by the farmers, for it appears to be the product of a different sphere than man - perhaps nature, perhaps God.

The confusions indicated by the above are manifold. A dispute which ought to have its natural setting observed was referred to in industrial terms, and economic theories were applied to that dispute couched in natural images.

Clifford, as the deadlock continued, appeared to feel obliged to explain his choice of the word "lockout":

The word is an ugly one and had unpleasant associations. The farmers themselves do not like the use of it but there is no other word which so accurately represents the situation.

(8)

However, far from bringing in "unpleasant associations", "lockout" actually avoided them, since it cloaked dismissal. For example,

by April 6th, Clifford was reporting that landowners had stepped in to dismiss union men from tied estate cottages. They were given till Lady Day, which traditionally followed harvest time. By April 9th, Clifford was reporting numbers of three to four thousand locked out. It was at this point that lockouts were called in districts where no strike had been even threatened. Clifford observed that there was no intimidation of non-union men by the unions, and giving a balanced view, also stated that the farmers were objecting not so much to their men's demand for a shilling a week extra, but to the "paid agitators" who put them up to it. They had refused the offer because of these intruders. Clifford then excused the notice to quit their cottages (seeming not to understand that this was a notice to quit work) by pointing out that the landowners had a legitimate need for their homes in order to house new, non-union labour. Two days later he reported that the Duke of Rutland, a landowner in the Newmarket area, considered the labourer to be lucky to have a tied cottage since Lady Day was a long way off, unlike the unlucky city dweller. It did not occur to him that a striking city worker had housing which was not connected with his work and therefore need not quit unless he could not pay the rent. No amount of strike pay could keep these rural labourers in their tied cottages.

Clearly it was less controversial to head a column "lockout" than "reprisals". Although Clifford saved "unpleasant associations" by using this readily available word from the industrial labour disputes, he also brought in associations which were inapplicable to the situation. One of these was the suggestion that the strike

was caused by an urban takeover of rural workers. The farmers appeared to believe this was so, as did the quality press.

Union delegates were seen as "paid agitators" from the industrial north, instead of the rural labourers they were.⁽⁹⁾

The use of the term "lockout" transferred an urban term to a rural world and at a subliminal level confirmed an actual movement from urban to rural in an influx of agitators who would upset the natural state of affairs in the country.

In this way the labourer was denied his part in the movement and so was freed from criticism. The farmers and landowners were also then free from blame. The labourer could not know what he was doing, it was argued; he probably thought he was joining a benefit society when he joined the union; he was taken in, and would soon realise who his real friends were.⁽¹⁰⁾ Alongside the terminology of the industrial world other phrases could be circulated. The law of supply and demand was evoked, as has been shown, together with the idea that the labourer was free to "sell his labour in the best market". Such theories may not be credible even in the industrial or commercial city but they were certainly inapplicable in the country where the labourer was immobile.⁽¹¹⁾ Tied cottages and isolated villages remote from railways held the married labourer to his area, preventing his access to labour markets. It took the organising power of three unions to try to find work for the locked out, and they could only succeed in holding the number to the original two thousand at the very start of the dispute. The numbers rose as more and more farmers locked out their unionised men. The unions' migration and emigration schemes never caught up.

It is clear that the dispute was complex. For example, it was difficult to try to work out a basic minimum yearly wage for the labourer, unlike his city counterpart. The rural problems of seasonal fluctuations, the sort of agriculture and the methods, which changed from district to district, defied a uniform statistical review. Non-money earnings, and whether or not they should be costed and included, also contributed to the difficulty. A letter from Edmund Turner to The Times on April 7th⁽¹²⁾ included the cost of non-money earnings in his estimate of a weekly wage, but "A Farmer" writing on April 15th simply gave the sums he paid in North Lincolnshire for a week's work.⁽¹³⁾ Two days later⁽¹⁴⁾ George Culley stated that piece-work should be discouraged; instead workers in the south, who were paid lower rates than those in the north, should be given parity. It was not until the 30th April⁽¹⁵⁾ that Waveney attempted to give a table showing a fixed fair amount for wages. It did not make sense which, he claimed, proved his point that such a table was a useless exercise. There was quite a to-and-fro amongst the letter writers concerning piece-work. Writing from the House of Commons on the 1st May,⁽¹⁶⁾ Mr S.B. Ruggles Brise included a reference to piece-work in his lengthy letter opposed to unionisation. In reply⁽¹⁷⁾ Mr Henry Taylor, a rural trade unionist, stated that although piece-work (he used the term "task work") was encouraged by the unions, they did not approve of the present low rates for such intense labour. On May 7th⁽¹⁸⁾ "A Borderer" offered the Scots system as a way out. Yearly hirings with a free house and garden in part money payment added a further £50 a year to his labourers' wages. He disapproved of free beer for the labourer, which made them "besotted" in his opinion. They would respect themselves more if the English farmers gave them a free cow or money instead. On May 23rd⁽¹⁹⁾ George Osborn confirmed that it was the north/south differential

which caused the demand for higher wages. He felt that the farmers could not be expected to give a fixed wage, as their markets were not fixed. Instead, they should give free land in the form of allotments.

The debate was inconclusive. Each writer could cite statistics taken from their district which contradicted a letter from another area and so on. The argument called on a wide body of opinion but could not reach a consensus, or provide a platform for arbitration.

Perhaps the most unjust effect of the term "lockout" was that it seemed to contemporaries to be fair; "strike" answered by "lockout" represented equal weapons of labour warfare. (See Fig.1 from Punch in 1889 as an example of this reading of the term). The Bishop of Manchester⁽²⁰⁾ in his second letter to The Times on 14th April pointed out that there was a third weapon which was eviction. Both the landlord and the local vicar could evict. The landlord had control of cottages and the vicar held control of the allotments. These weapons reduced the fairness of the fight. The landowner stood behind the farmer of course, for without his agreement a lockout would not be possible. It was his land which was being farmed at a reduced rate during an enforced and artificial labour shortage. As in industrial labour disputes, the lockout was partial, and non-union labour was employed, but just as it is impossible to be locked out of a field, so it is impossible effectively to picket an estate. The farmer was able to employ women and children and to import casual labour to assist him to maintain the lockout as well as his land.⁽²¹⁾



Fig. 6:1

"BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR!"

Clifford's use of the word "lockout" revealed his journalistic readiness to employ the language to hand as well as his own initial bias towards the farmers. Taken together, the word and the assumptions behind the word make up a political position which was opposed to the radicalism of the unions.

Clifford went to the troubled areas with these assumptions confidently held, and it would have seemed safe to predict that he would maintain that position throughout his stay. Indeed, it might have been thought, in advance, that the longer Clifford remained in the country, the more he would imbibe the bias of the class he moved among. He was not housed with the labourers he had come to report on, as Joseph Arch, the President of the National Agricultural Union, had requested such examiners and reporters on the labourers be housed. In Arch's speech at Manchester he set out clearly his motives for this request:

Writers had come into the rural districts and had written eloquent descriptions of the beautiful thatched cottages in which the labourers lived; they had expiated upon their woodbine bowers and their little geranium gardens (laughter); but they had never entered their dwellings and lived with them (Hear, Hear). What he had proposed when Her Majesty's Commons were going through the rural districts was that these honorable gentlemen should stay a month among them and live with them (Hear, Hear and cheers). It was all very fine for men who were fond of the picturesque and the beautiful to admire the antique cottage of the labourer, but let them enter into his hardships and his sorrows, let them try to exist on 10/-, 12/- or 13/- a week and he was satisfied that they would then write down the positive facts in the words of the metaphor of Holy Writ - that the cottage might be beautiful without, but inside it was full of death and misery (Hear, Hear).

(22)

Then a fundamental journalistic problem altered this predictable pattern. Clifford ran out of copy. Almost within a week he had

given the history of the dispute, as far as he knew it⁽²³⁾ and recorded the status quo, and then nothing happened. The union continued to support its members and the farmers strengthened and increased the already formed Defence Leagues.⁽²⁴⁾ The numbers of the locked out rose, and the numbers of migrants and emigrants rose almost equally. Both sides sat tight to await the harvest. There was nothing for Clifford to do either but watch the weather and wait for June. At first he began to repeat material in greater detail:

Various speakers set forth views substantially identical with those attributed to them in a previous letter - that work on the farm was well in advance, that the farmers on the whole were not in want of labour, that the lockout was necessary to teach the men a lesson, and that good, instead of evil, would result to the farmer because he on his side would be taught to economise labour.....⁽²⁵⁾

This ploy could not be used very often, even if it were to be written in a more enterprising fashion. It does, however, serve to show his initial bias. Finally, Clifford was obliged to go in search of the material. He left Newmarket and visited nearby villages, but declared he was not in search of "model villages",⁽²⁶⁾ and it turned out that he was not in search of the picturesque as Arch had predicted. Instead of reporting events, Clifford started to observe situations and settings. Instead of attempting to work out wages and to cost non-money earnings, he asked the labourers themselves for their accounts. He soon discovered that they were unable to work out their own yearly wage, so much did the harvest piece-work fluctuate. The weather would have to be

predicted first which would affect the crop which would in turn affect the amount to be harvested. From the middle of April onward the columns under the title "The Agricultural Lockout" contained not news, nor quite nature vignettes, but observations. A description of a village school, for instance, or the life history of old labourers told by themselves. Clifford described these as "notes" or individually as a "sketch".

As yet there is no outward sign of concession among the farmers either of east or west Suffolk, but we must wait till next market day at Newmarket or Bury St Edmunds before we know whether the example of the Lincolnshire farmers will be followed here. Meanwhile, some "notes" taken in a few of the East Suffolk villages may be of interest.

Take this sketch of a part of Stradbroke.....

(27)

When first sent into the area, Clifford reported on the activities of the labourers unions in a neutral style. The payment of union funds for instance was made in public meetings on a market day. In his earlier style, the coverage of the event would only have revealed the figures of the locked out. But once Clifford was short of copy, market days were described in great detail:

Much earlier in the day the labourers had been gathering in the street, which they paraded with a band of music at their head and a few blue banners. All the men wore bits of blue riband. I suppose there were five or six hundred of them; half that number of women accompanied them. The women were respectably dressed nearly all wearing blue ribands in their bonnets, and occupied the place of honour in the van of the procession, marching four or five abreast like the men. At about half past two o'clock they gathered round a wagon placed upon a piece of waste land called the Severals, near the exercise ground, and listened to some stirring addresses.

(28)

Clifford shows that he had paid attention to the precise locality and the clothes worn by the labourers. The women are "respectably" dressed and are treated with respect, holding the place of honour on the march. They were not observed before. Around this point in the dispute, Clifford also gave two reports on the activities of the unemployed men, describing them playing marbles and whittling. Clifford was able to report that to sleep later than five in the morning was not only a luxury for an agricultural labourer, but a necessity in the struggle against hunger. These observations carried more weight than the mere fact that the unions were supporting men on nine shillings a week, when they had asked for a rise from thirteen to fourteen shillings a week in the Newmarket district where Clifford was then staying. Clifford was aware of the violence that might be below the surface, as a result of this hardship:

As the time passes, however, and the men and their families suffer greater hardships on reduced means of subsistence, the risk of disorder becomes greater. The weekly demonstrations are always arranged for the market day, when the farmers, of course, muster in large numbers and talk with each other upon what they think their grievances.

(29)

The revelation of Clifford's changed perception comes in his contrast between the suffering of the labourers and the supposed "grievances" of the farmers. The phrase "what they think their grievances" is unexpected and arresting.

This change is not simply the case of a journalist dropping a neutral report style in favour of an established descriptive form. As has already been shown in Section II, such descriptions of the

labourer were not present in the 1870s within the quality press. But the style is reminiscent of the informed nature rambler, stripped of its personal and intimate tone. Clifford adapted this existing form, and blending it with the news reportage style took the form in a new direction. Earlier, Clifford stated that the farmers were the "natural protectors" of the labourer⁽³⁰⁾ as if he too believed it, and that it was "ominous" that the unions fought for "principles not money".⁽³¹⁾ I do not say that his change in style implies a change of politics, still less in class allegiance. Clifford did not become a Radical because he had to find copy. But the new descriptive style offered another aspect to the dispute for The Times readers. The knowledge gained from his closer view of the labourer could also be turned into campaigning journalism, as Clifford demonstrated when he began to use his column to lobby for free access to allotments for the labourers. He did not do this from Arch's viewpoint that enclosure had robbed the rural worker, but from his own class assumptions and perceptions. Clifford argued that access to allotments improved not only the material life of the labourer, but also his sense of himself. This lobbying carried an implicit criticism of the farmers.

On April 22nd, 1874, when Clifford was reporting for The Times from Cambridge, he gave this carefully phrased account of a farmer:

He was a farmer who had declared to me that he would rather give up his holding than employ unionist hands. Probably he may have used the same language when protection was taken away from the British farmer. But I cannot help hoping and believing that the labour problem will get itself solved, even without suppressing agricultural trade unions, and that my excellent friends will nevertheless still go on farming and will still prosper.

(32)

It is a politically significant comment to recall the anti-corn law activities and the reactions of farmers then to a change which later was seen to benefit them. This, backed by the politely understated remark "I cannot help hoping and believing" followed by the slightly ingratiating (or ironic) "my excellent friends" reveals Clifford as critical of the farmers while yet impartially, on the surface at least, recording both sides of the dispute. He had then been out of the city for five weeks. His initial bias against the labourers weakened the longer he stayed in the rural area, and his articles became tinged with pro-union sympathy.

Describing a market day assembly in Newmarket, for instance, when five to six hundred men and two to three hundred women marched to hear the union delegate, Mr Ball, answer the current attack by the farmers that delegates were "paid agitators", Clifford reported the scene in great detail. His comment:

Throughout the day the unionists were extremely well conducted and I did not see a single case of intoxication or misbehaviour among them.

(33)

has a tone of surprise in it, as if he expected drunkenness. His new eye-witness information led to new attention to such occasions and Clifford learned the way the National Union head office worked. Far from sending men to whip up agitation, said Ball, the most extreme demands were all local. The central union authority struggled to control them, and had in fact ordered a ceiling of seventeen shillings a week to be maintained in further wage demands. Sundry other facts were given to The Times readers via Clifford as a result of his attention to this meeting, and then, right at the end of this article, he placed the following sentence:

In the market place today new competitors
appeared for the unemployed bone and sinew
of the district in the persons of two
recruiting sergeants.

(34)

Although it is a cliché to refer to the labourers as "bone and sinew", the concluding sentence, after the sympathetic presentation of the labourers, strikes rather a menacing note. Clifford gave the impression of competitors fighting like dogs over the bones of the labourers. The whole article supports the feeling that Clifford was moving towards sympathy for the labourers, and that his reports were reflecting that change. The unexpected harshness of his concluding sentence remains ambiguous but lends support to this belief.

Clifford's change in perception and sympathy does not need to rest entirely on close reading of his reports in The Times. There is evidence for his sympathy to be found in his actions.

Towards the end of April, Clifford went to Bury St Edmunds and described a farmers' meeting where three union rules concerning notice for strikes were cited as objectionable, and were used as the justification to extend the lockout in that area. The three rules were discussed as if they were applicable to all the unionised men, and the lockout was to apply to them all, whether a strike had been called in certain parishes or not. Clifford gave a full report on the meeting, with verbatim quotations from the dissenting minority farmers as well as the majority of farmers who wished to extend the lockout. After some debate, all opposition was overcome and the vote for a further lockout of union labour was unanimously carried. All was written without comment by Clifford. Two days later, he again wrote from Bury St Edmunds, and began his article with a synopsis of the previous news. He then stated that the three objectionable rules only applied to one of the unions in that area: the Lincolnshire Labour League, which was the smallest, and though the other unions did not carry such rules on their statute books, they, too, would be locked out. Clifford's explanation highlighted the fact that farmers and commentators took the three unions involved in the dispute as equivalents of each other. Their differences in structure had not been observed. Clifford's follow-up article contained a full account of the different rules of the unions - the first time The Times readers had been given such information - and tactfully stated:

The resolutions passed at the farmers' meeting on Wednesday, if they are to be strictly construed, place the farmers in rather a difficult position.

(35)

Clifford also referred to the fact that a minority of the farmers had been opposed to the extension of the lockout but put this factual information in a personal way: "The minority - I fear a small one -" and went on to appeal to these and other moderates in the three hundred strong meeting to reverse the decision in the light of the given facts.

It is much desired that men of influence and moderate men, landowners and farmers, should attend the committee meeting and limit the lockout as it appears to be limited by the terms of the meeting.

(36)

He concluded:

I have gone with some detail into the union rules, because I think the distinction drawn by the Bury resolution makes the time a very appropriate one for a dispassionate consideration of the rules. Whether the majority of the West Suffolk farmers quite foresaw the position in which this resolution would place them is a question into which I need not enter. But the occasion seems to be eminently one in which the cooler heads among them should try to save the farmers from, it may be, one of those victories which I still think would be worse than a disaster.

(37)

Clifford made it plain that the Bury St Edmunds farmers, having exposed themselves by declaring that there were but three rules to which they objected, were without a reason for locking out the men in the National and Federal Unions, whose members comprised the bulk of the unionised labour in their area. He stated that the extended lockout would bring about a victory for the farmers, but made it clear that he did not approve of

of victory achieved by those means. Despite the sidestepping phrase "a question into which I need not enter" Clifford in fact roundly and logically attacked the farmers.

Clifford's second report on the Bury meeting was entirely his own. It was his contribution to the debate. He put his own voice clearly in the personal phrases: "It seems to me"; "I fear that" and "I still think". In the final line where he considered that the farmers should be saved from their victory, he made it obvious that he considered they had reached an unjust decision which was dishonourable to them. The word he used was "disaster" which more fits the effect of that decision on the unionised labourers and this, too, shows how far his sympathies lay with them.

On May 6th, the same farmers held another meeting in private. Clifford was not allowed to attend, as he noted in his report for that day, commenting that their meeting was closed because they objected to too much "spouting". On May 8th, he reported that Mr Brand, current speaker for the House of Commons and a generous Sussex landowner,⁽³⁸⁾ had attended the closed meeting. As a result of their discussions, Mr Brand, and Mr Kerrish, another liberal landowner, local to the area who had already written to The Times asking for arbitration⁽³⁹⁾ were nominated as arbitrators. They would negotiate with the Lincolnshire Labour League on behalf of the farmers and try to alter the three rules in question. An acceptable solution was found on May 15th, twenty days after Clifford's comments on the Bury St Edmunds farmers. I think it might be claimed, without over exaggerating

the influence of The Times, that Clifford was instrumental in bringing about the end of that lockout without the members of the League having to hand in their union cards. Those unionised men were allowed to go back to work. (40)

. The evidence of his campaigning journalism is proof of Clifford's change of sympathy after he left the city. The way in which he altered his writing, moving from straight impartial reporting to descriptions, and then back to a news style which blended both personal observation with the news form, is a new departure for a reporter from The Times. There is a last example of the extent of his movement away from the farmers, and it appeared in The Times on July 14th when the whole dispute had ended in the collapse of the two major agricultural unions. Clifford reported:

At a private meeting held in Bury St Edmunds on Saturday it was resolved to form an "East Anglian Farmers' Central Board of Consultation" and as representatives from all or nearly all the Defence Associations of East Anglia were present, there is no doubt that the members of these Associations throughout the five counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire and Essex, will henceforth be prepared to act in unison in the event of any fresh difficulty about labour. The Board will consist of delegates, or, if that be too distasteful a word to the farmers of representatives from the Defence Associations which have been formed in these counties. (41)

By deliberately catching at this own choice of words, he drew attention to the fact that the farmers were forming a union of their own, just when they had defeated the labourers' own unions. The word "delegates" so familiar from the dispute, and so often interchangeable with "agitators", would obviously be "distasteful to the

farmers". The very term "the farmers" is far removed from "my excellent friends" employed by Clifford when he first left London.

It must be stressed that the foregoing analysis is of writing in The Times, one of the influential newspapers of the period. It is not just the language of an insignificant journalist which has been charted, but that of a man with the potential to influence opinion. His information was presented column by column with the conflicting opinions found in the letters to The Times. All the material which related to the dispute was printed in one place in the newspaper. Usually Clifford's article came first, then any reports on the head office or central meetings of the Agricultural Unions - National, Federal and the Lincolnshire Labour League - and then the letters.

Lady Stradbroke and the Bishop of Manchester.

On April 2nd, Doctor Fraser, the Bishop of Manchester, wrote a short letter to The Times asking "are the farmers mad?" and wondering if they wanted a "peasants war".⁽⁴²⁾ This letter contributed to the debate in The Times and one reply came from Lady Stradbroke.⁽⁴³⁾ She wrote privately to Fraser, who then passed her letter to The Times for publication. The letter contained a long and detailed attack on the Bishop. It is not clear whether she gave her permission for publication of her private letter. It began:

My Lord - I apologise for intruding upon you this letter; my only excuse is that your public attack on our Eastern Counties farmers challenges replies, and that I am prepared to say a few words in their defence; and to set you right upon some points of the case on which you have evidently received erroneous information.

(44)

At the beginning of this year in question, the Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture was published. This Commission began work in 1867 and was headed by Dr Fraser. He was therefore in possession of far more information, over a wider area and for a longer period, than Lady Stradbroke would have acquired from her charitable work on her husband's estates. Her isolation is revealed by this ignorance of her opponent. Her feeling of superiority is shown in her sense that she can "put him right" and her confidence when she charges him with ignorance and wrong assumptions. As the letter goes on, these basic assumptions are expressed more clearly:

No increase of wages has yet been demanded; the labourers have been well paid and fully employed throughout a long winter, and had no cause for discontent; delegates have been sent down from other parts of England (chief towns) (sic) and are endeavouring to make our men dissatisfied and join their League to swell their own funds. There is no combination of employers to resist the demands of the workmen, as in the manufacturing and coal and iron districts, but the farmers in declining to engage men who have joined the League adopt the simplest form of defence against a threatened attack, which, if it came in the time of hay or harvest, would not only ruin the farmers, but produce scarcity and distress throughout all England.

(45)

There are three main points in her argument quoted above. One is that there was no demand for an increase in wages; two is that the

labourers had been given a full winter's work, and therefore had no cause for discontent, and the third concerned the delegates who came from the north, with their alleged purpose to raise money for themselves. The first line "no increase of wages has yet been demanded" also meant that there had not been a strike on the Stradbroke Estate.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Although a defence league had not been formed still the men had been locked out. She offered the "fact" that the workers had been given a winter's work as an example of employers' generosity. She clearly did not see the labourers might want the security of not just one winter but every winter's employment.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The most significant point in her statement must be her assumption that delegates came from the industrial north. Lady Stradbroke provides an example of the assumption that because they were quiet, rural workers were contented. The idea that the unions only offered the means for expression and were not imposing expression was beyond her understanding of the agricultural labourer. She saw only that the labourers who joined the union were misled. Such a viewpoint appeared constantly in the letters column and in Clifford's verbatim reports of comments by farmer, and is a patronising assumption which carried comfort for those who preferred the image of the passive labourer. Lady Stradbroke dismissed the union as corrupt in her suggestion that they kept the funds for themselves and painted a picture of gentle farmers only "declining" to employ unionised labour out of concern for national interests. (It is interesting that this argument was not employed against the farmers. It was not seen as patriotic to pay the increase in wages, or for the landowner to lower the farmers' rents to enable them to pay higher wages. No journalist or letter-writer suggested that the landowner and farmer might save the nation by putting their hands in their pockets.)

By adopting the attitude that the union delegates were entirely to blame, Lady Stradbroke conveniently absolved herself from any suggestion that she and others in her position caused rural discontent. For Lady Stradbroke it was even more convenient if those delegates who caused unrest could come from the industrial north, for this gave her an opportunity to attack those "commercial classes" in the industrial cities.

We have many burdens laid on us to further the interests of the commercial classes. Is it fair that these classes are now to come down upon us and rob us of the only advantages we possess - peace, quietness and contentment?

(48)

She deliberately chose non-material advantages since she was not "commercial" herself, but notice those adjectives used to describe the advantages she possesses: "peace, quietness and contentment". They are words used for the country by those with leisure and with aesthetic sensibilities. Lady Stradbroke valued nature when stripped of people. The country for her contained "peace, quietness and contentment" because she felt she was above the "commercial" spirit, but it was in fact because she had power and possession of land. Her view of nature, although displaying the aesthetic, is couched in words which lack any artistic evaluation. They are words used to describe security of tenure. She believed the country held these values and advantages for her and she meant to keep them. But the countryside could only be

maintained peaceful and quiet if the work force which kept the landscape orderly and profitable were also kept dependent. She revealed this assumption when she stated her belief that high wages would only result in drunkenness.

Probably if our Easterns succeed in obtaining what the delegates wish them to strike for - inordinately high wages and a few hours work - we shall see the same melancholy results - miserable, unfurnished homes, squalid wives and children, a feast one day, starvation the next, and disorderly men with pipes in their mouths reeling about our calm and peaceful lanes. What a contrast from the pretty, clean cottages, rosy happy children, and industrious fathers, working during their leisure hours in their own neat trim gardens.

(49)

Those pleasures she found in the country would be ruined for her if she had to share them with "disorderly men with pipes in their mouths". She sees them "reeling about our calm and peaceful lanes" to which it appeared they had no right, unless they kept within her view of nature and her image of the labourer. Workers, unless controlled by patronage, would in fact mar the view. The country was only "calm and peaceful" if the workers conformed to her idyll and continued to live in the way her patronage made possible: "pretty clean cottages, rosy happy children and industrious fathers, working in their leisure hours in their own neat gardens." (50)

It is understandable that being familiar with the evidence of the Royal Commission, Dr Fraser would see a reason for unionisation among labourers but Lady Stradbroke's limited knowledge and her strongly aesthetic views of nature and its inhabitants did not permit her to face the idea of unionisation at all. Independence

among the labourers would mean she had no power as she clearly realised:

You make no mention and probably never take into account, the low rent of their cottages ... Also you say nothing of their benefit clubs, clothing, coal and show clubs, etc., subscribed to anonymously and chiefly supported by their employers, their cottage garden shows and prizes; their dinners and treats at Christmas and Harvest...

'It is more blessed to give than receive' and deeply shall we who have formed these clubs, and carried them out to the best of our ability, for the good of our poorer neighbours, grieve to give them up.

(51)

Lady Stradbroke, however, saw herself as "a true friend" of the labourers whom she felt were "poor deluded men who are going to throw away home, happiness, content, perhaps even country, by persisting in joining this League".⁽⁵²⁾

This was the note on which her letter ended after extending an invitation to Dr Fraser to come to her husband's estate to see for himself.

Obviously, Dr Fraser's motive in passing on her letter to The Times was to expose her to sharp counter-attack. He must have been disappointed in the response, for there is very little evidence that her attitude was unusual.

Responses to Lady Stradbroke

The day after Lady Stradbroke's letter was published, Joseph Arch was in Manchester. His visit and his speeches were reported in The Times under the heading : Mr Arch and the Bishop of Manchester.⁽⁵³⁾ At the meeting, three cheers were given for the Bishop and three groans were suggested

for Lady Stradbroke, which were not however, carried out.⁵
A more complete response to her letter was given by the National Union at Exeter Hall in London on 24th April and was reported in The Times. Mr Ball, speaking at that meeting, and described by the anonymous reporter for The Times as "an ex-labourer and union delegate", was said to have spoken with "remarkable fluency and self possession". Ball stated at that meeting, with a generous use of negatives, that such a rural world as described by Lady Stradbroke "did not now and never had" existed. The Bishop himself did not reply, apart from a passing condemnation of her "idyllic picture" in his second letter to The Times.⁽⁵⁴⁾

And there the comment would seem to end, and in its lack of response confirms the impression that extreme though Lady Stradbroke's position might appear, it was in fact a generally accepted view. Her letter contained a view of nature which not only expressed the prejudices and assumptions of the majority of landowners and large farmers who considered themselves "gentry" but was also a part of the culturally accepted "aesthetic" view of nature.

There was one dissenting voice, and it came from the man on the spot: Clifford. When Clifford first began to search for material he stated that he intended to avoid those estates which boasted 'model villages' but during late May he moved to Ipswich and there cast his eye over Lord and Lady Stradbroke's own lands. On approaching the district he observed that Stradbroke itself was a village with an absentee landlord. Clifford looked closely at the estate and noted the excellence

72

6:28

of the labourer's housing, pointing out the drawback of a water shortage, and gave a favourable picture of the amenities. The patronage of allotment societies, and prize garden shows were mentioned, and the knitting groups of labourers' wives. The claim made by Lady Stradbroke for her care of the labourers became modified by his scrutiny;

In Stradbroke, as I have said, all the cottages where there are children possess two bedrooms, and taking fourteen of these cottages, I find nine with eight inmates, two with nine, two with eleven and one with thirteen.

(55)

The figures speak for themselves. Despite the evidence that the new cottages boasted two bedrooms, even this 'luxury' was not enough considering the large size of the families. (56) Nevertheless, they were models in comparison with the village of Maypole Green in the next parish (still on Stradbroke lands) where the cottages were in bad condition. By covering the whole area, Clifford revealed that the model cottages and gardens, so treasured by Lady Stradbroke, only existed in the village closest to the manor. His reports put Lady Stradbroke's claims into perspective. He does not directly refute her letter but illustrates well with his own ability to look closely and with intelligent sympathy, her narrow "aesthetic" view.

Pictures and Cartoons

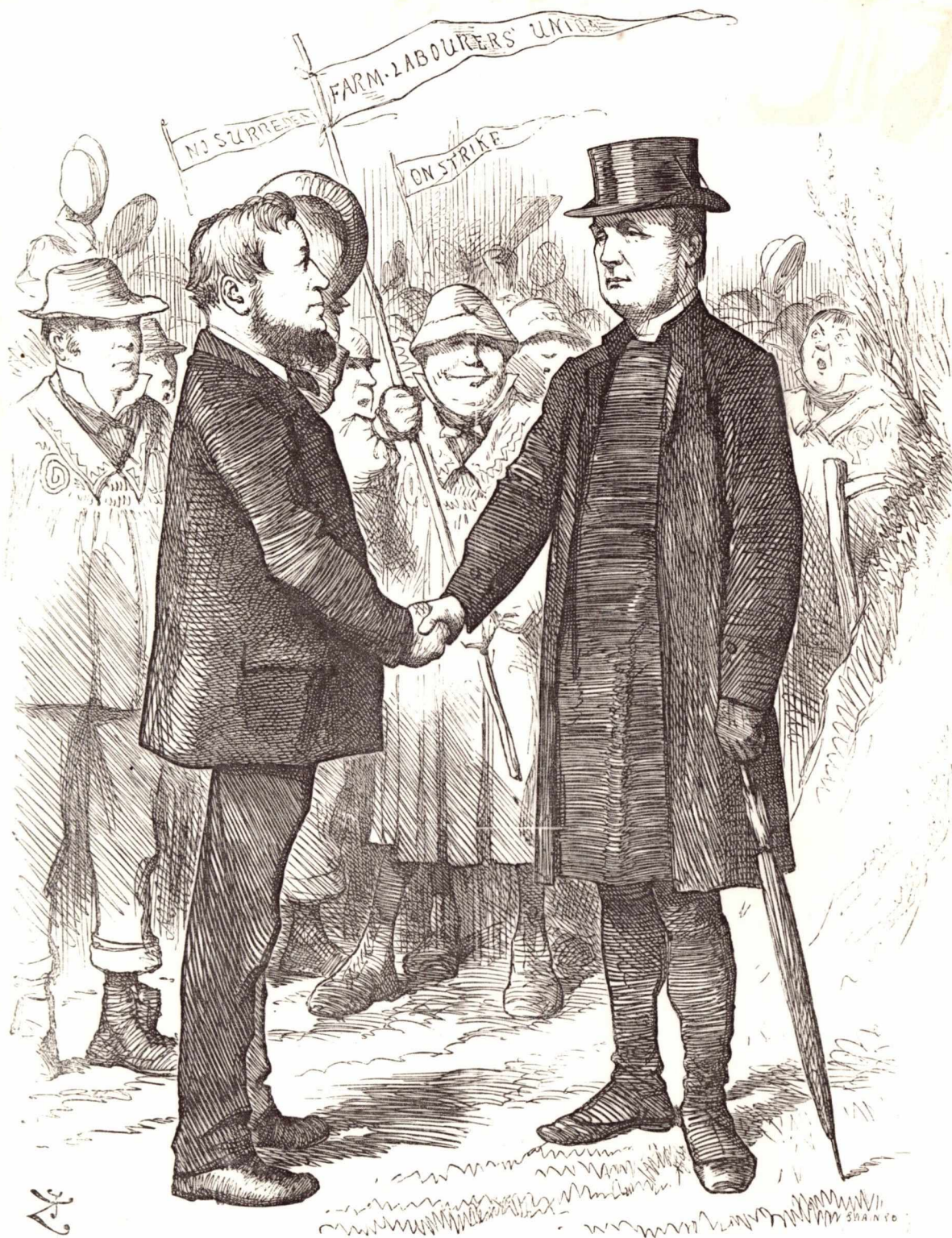
Clifford used the term 'sketch' to describe the kind of writing he employed once he ran out of news and was forced to pass on observations. Actual sketches, not just in words, of the events

covered by Clifford also appeared in The Times' rival newspaper, Graphic. The engravings in Graphic and the cartoons in Punch also help to place Clifford's change of perception in context. They supply their version of the 1874 strike and lockout through pictures and cartoons.

Punch, on April 18th, centred upon the Bishop of Manchester's letter to The Times and showed, under the caption "A New Arch Bishop", Dr Fraser joining the union. It is a cartoon which seems both to support Arch and to ridicule the labourers. Arch is shown in clothes which are almost the same as Dr Fraser's, but the background is filled up with the labourers dressed in traditional smock frocks. The effect is to give Arch an equivalent status to the Bishop, and yet it also puts into the background the labourers themselves, quite literally. Particularly effective in this underplaying of the labourer are the faces in the centre and on the extreme right of the cartoon which depict labourers with moronic and idiotic expressions. Punch supported Arch by presenting him sympathetically, but the cartoon separated him from the labourers and so made ambiguous his social position as an ex-labourer, and an ex-Methodist preacher. Apart from his respectful bearing, he could almost be that mythical agitator from the north, he looked so unlike the body of the union. Punch seemed to be simply illustrating The Times' letter column in this cartoon, giving a picture to correspond with an entry in that column.

Graphic, however, regularly carried a column called Rural Notes and so illustrated its own comments rather than those in The Times.

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—APRIL 18, 1874.



A NEW ARCH-BISHOP.

JOSEPH ARCH (*to* BISHOP OF MANCHESTER). "AH! MY LORD, I NEVER EXPECTED TO FIND YOUR LORDSHIP ON OUR SIDE!"

[See the BISHOP OF MANCHESTER'S Letter to the *Times* on the Lock-out of the Labourers—"Are the Farmers mad?" &c., &c.]

Rural Notes covered reports on stock prices, improvements in farming methods, and the weather. Once the dispute in the eastern counties took place, an extra heading was included in the column: "The Strike and Lockout". Graphic's conservative stance is revealed in the following comments taken from Rural Notes:

Without for one single moment denying the right of agricultural labourers to combine to secure better wages, just as workers in cities do, we must unhesitatingly declare that they have been very ill-advised. They are a simple people in the rural districts, and they have been led astray in this matter of the redress of their grievances to a great extent by 'spouters', who are much better acquainted with the purlieus of London than the green lanes of Essex, or the broad beautifully tilled acres of Norfolk. Through town agitators poor Hodge was suddenly instructed that he was a serf. Probably he did not quite understand the significance of the noun, but when he was further informed that he was a worm, and that he was trodden upon by his employers, his 'birses' rose up as stiffly as those upon his own porker.

(57)

There is no hesitation in the mind of the writer that 'Hodge' was a stupid, easily-led person ("they are a simple people") who had been "led astray" despite his legal right to "combine". Since the labourers were asking room to fatten a pig, the metaphor chosen by the writer to express the labourer's indignation was either unfortunate or very apt. Furthermore, the use of the collective noun for the labourer 'Hodge' shows the difference between that paper and The Times. 'Hodge' was not used in The Times although the word 'peasantry' seemed an interchangeable word for the labourer in that paper. To use 'Hodge' is to keep a stock comic figure before the

reader, and so deny the labourer any individuality. The writer went on to comment that there was a case for reform for better cottages but deplored the strike (not the lockout) and trusted that the labourer would soon come to his senses. Compare that representation with the labourer in the cartoon in Punch on May 2nd, under the caption "Small by Degrees". Although the dialect is perhaps as stagey as the use of the word "birses" in Graphic, the labourer is permitted a sharp personal reply to the farmer which demonstrates the need for higher wages clearly through the detail of the expenses "Our Sal" has to meet. These add up in fact to fourteen shillings and threepence, which lends strong support to the union's demand for a rise to thirteen shillings a week, all the year round. The Suffolk ploughman is shown in his smock frock, but without an idiot grin, while the information as to his wife, and his respect for her (and himself) gives him dignity.

The Graphic's first engraving on the dispute appeared in the same week as the above, on May 9th, and in calling itself "A Sketch Near Bury St Edmunds", carried greater authenticity than a cartoon. It is a curious picture for this conservative paper. The somewhat surly expressions of the labourers seem to indicate that it would be titled "A Farmer Talks to Unionised Men" but the title in fact runs: "The Agricultural Lockout - A Suffolk Farmer and His Men". Graphic claimed their artist was present at a meeting reported in The Times where a farmer addressed his assembled men to talk over the situation with them. However, Clifford's reports of such meetings (and he referred to several) showed them taking place in proper assemblies. There were no



"SMALL BY DEGREES."

Suffolk Farmer. "TWO SHILL'N'S A WEEK MORE!! NEVER! THAT'LL NEVER DO!—OUT O' THE QUESTION!"

Suffolk Ploughman. "YOU'RE RIGHT THERE, MAS'R WUZZLES, SART'N SURE! IT 'ON'T DEW. OUR SAL SARY THERE'LL BE EIGHT SHILL'N' AND THREEPENCE FOR BREAD, THREE-AND-SIXPENCE FOR RENT AND COAL, AND HALF-A-CRAOWN FOR CLUB, CLOTHES, BOTES, AND SHOES FOR THE OWD 'OMAN, FIVE KIDS, AND ME. NO, THAT 'ON'T DEW—THAT, THAT 'ON'T, E'UM BY. BUT IT'LL BE ENOW TO BEGIN WITH!!"

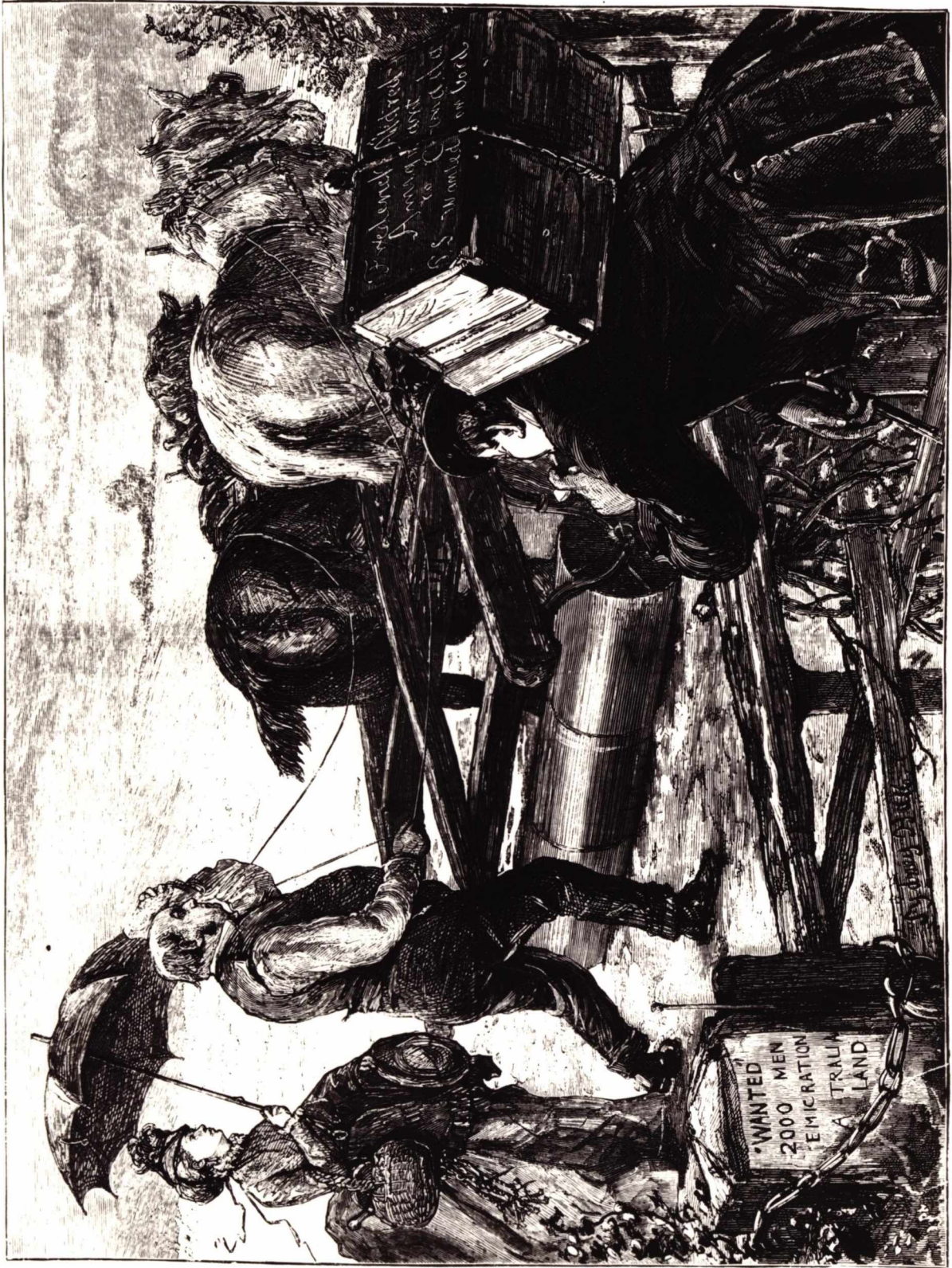


THE AGRICULTURAL LOCK OUT—A SUFFOLK FARMER AND HIS MEN
A SKETCH NEAR BURY ST. EDMUNDS

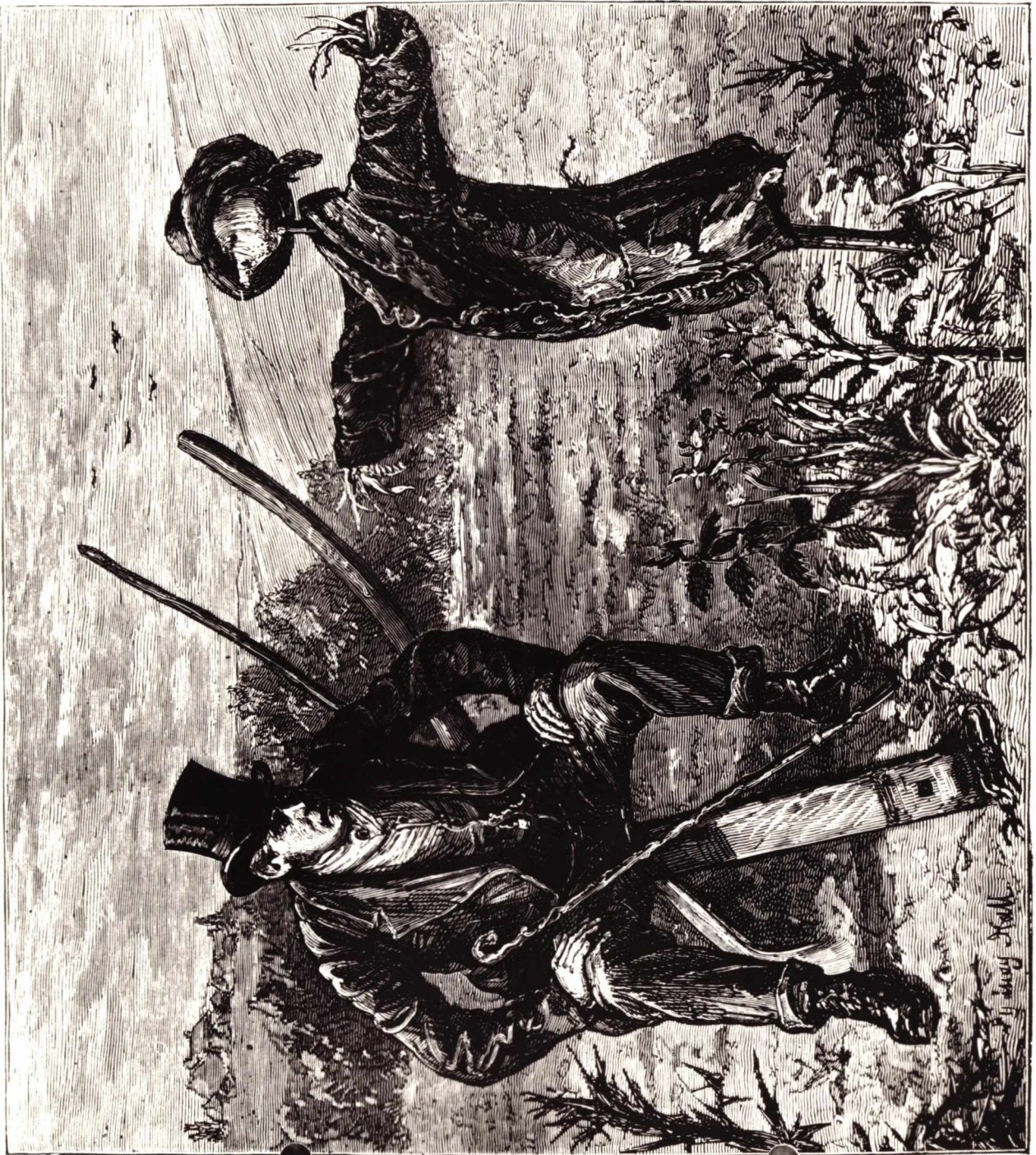
references in The Times to little groups of reclining men as is shown by Graphic's artist. At first sight it seems that the figure standing in white is ostracised from the closed group, which includes the farmer, and therefore he could represent the locked out. But a closer look at the expressions on the faces of the men in the foreground undermines that interpretation. They look surly and even undernourished, and their disrespectful lounging attitudes as well as turned backs to the farmer, must surely make them appear both defiant and bitter. This interpretation would make the white clothed labourer a man who was ready for work, a non-unionised man; separated from the unionised men by his cleanliness and respectful bearing, as well as by the "slough" that lies between them. The expressions of the men in the foreground do look authentic, but the background of the sketch looks like a standard fill-in, possibly taken from Graphic's file rather than from on the spot. Taken on face value, as an eye-witness report, the sketch does not entirely endorse Graphic's pro-farmer stance.

The second picture from Graphic shows more ambiguities. Called "The Farmer His Own Labourer", it is meant to be a sympathetic representation of the farmer having to till his own land, because of the actions of the labourer. An idle representative "Hodge" on his way to emigrate, leans over the gate, watching. The weakness of the picture lies in the detail. The basic attitude of both figures supports the farmer but the details do not. The undignified portliness of the farmer behind his own team, handkerchief to his receding hairline, followed by

Fig. 6:5



THE AGRICULTURAL LOCK-OUT—THE FARMER HIS OWN LABOURER



THE AGRICULTURAL LOCK-OUT - "ANXIOUS MOMENTS"

Henry Wall.

his overburdened wife, holding a parasol (for the farmer, not for herself) and carrying his coat and hat, as well as a basket from which the neck of a wine bottle protrudes; all these tend to undercut sympathy for the farmer. It could be that these details were meant to serve as proof of the farmer's determination to look after his land while the labourer, literally, idled, but to bring in his wife seems to overload that reading, until it becomes faintly comic. To clarify any doubts about the characters in the picture, the labourer's trunk is labelled: "Frederick Aldred⁽⁵⁸⁾ A Migrant to Canada PS Wanted on Bord". (sic) On the side of the gate there is an emigration notice giving the familiar figure of 2,000, not locked out as in The Times but here wanted for emigration. The labourer is smoking his pipe while he leans in comfortable leisure - a better pictorial example of Lady Stradbroke's worst fears could not be found - and he certainly could not look less like a victim. The artist faced a dilemma, because to show the farmer actually working his own fields, would necessarily make him look like a labourer. Ludicrous though the trappings in the detail are, the hat, the coat and the wife's attire, all were necessary to distinguish clearly farmer from labourer when their roles were reversed.

A more effective picture for the farmer appeared in June in that newspaper. The farmer is shown looking sad and downcast, sitting on a disused plough surveying his weedy fields and a scarecrow. Titled "Anxious Moments", it captures the sense of a worried man with his livelihood at stake, anxiously waiting out the time. The picture makes the farmer a vulnerable figure alone in his neglected landscape and creates for the first time in Graphic, a significant sympathy for the

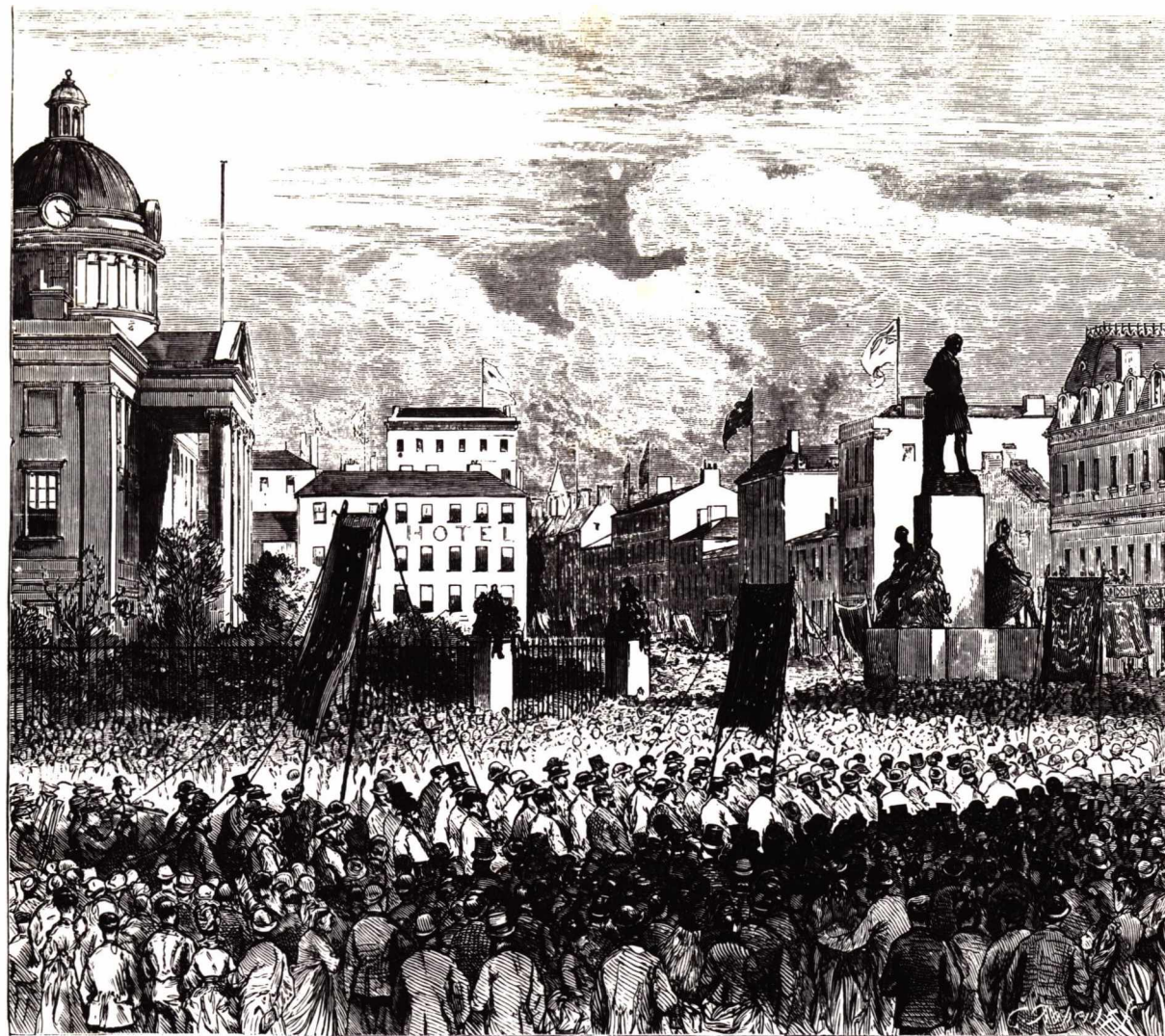
his overburdened wife, holding a parasol (for the farmer, not for herself) and carrying his coat and hat, as well as a basket from which the neck of a wine bottle protrudes; all these tend to undercut sympathy for the farmer. It could be that these details were meant to serve as proof of the farmer's determination to look after his land while the labourer, literally, idled, but to bring in his wife seems to overload that reading, until it becomes faintly comic. To clarify any doubts about the characters in the picture, the labourer's trunk is labelled: "Frederick Aldred⁽⁵⁷⁾ A Migrant to Canada PS Wanted on Bord" (sic). On the side of the gate there is an emigration notice giving the familiar figure of 2000, not locked out as in The Times but here wanted for emigration. The labourer is smoking his pipe while he leans in comfortable leisure - a better pictorial example of Lady Stradbroke's worst fears could not be found - and he certainly could not look less like a victim. The artist faced a dilemma, because to show the farmer actually working his own fields, he necessarily would look quite like a labourer. Ludicrous though the trappings in the details are, the hat, the coat and the wife's attire, were necessary to distinguish clearly farmer from labourer when their roles were reversed.

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individual, even suggesting an internal struggle required to lock out his workers, leaving only the "faithful" scarecrow.

The last picture from Graphic, "Trade Union Demonstration in Manchester in Favour of the Labourers", shows a parade of stern-faced, sober men marching with banners. The march, despite the large number of people, is orderly and dignified and the pensive attitude of the island statues aids the calm atmosphere. This picture comes from the end of the dispute and represents a more serious news coverage than before. The editors of Graphic, despite the quoted prejudiced report and one possibly bogus sketch, gave greater attention to the labourers and the farmer in these last two pictures, showing both the news value and the importance of the 1874 lockout.

On September 5th, Punch presented a clear pro-labourer picture. In its usual classical style it shows Ceres ordering her "harvest gifts" to be fairly shared between the overweight farmer and the thin labourer. This time there is no smock frock, and the labourer's face looks gaunt and despairing; his hat is under his arm, whilst the farmer, now the stock figure wearing his jaunty straw hat, has a brash and vulgar appearance in his tight checked suit. Behind them the distance is filled with a stored harvest. Although the statement is addressed to both, the picture asks the farmers, victorious in September, to be generous. To use the goddess of the harvest conveys the idea that the product grown does not belong just to those who own the land. Ceres is a nature goddess, she is not a symbol for the



THE FARM LABOURERS' LOCK-OUT—TRADES' UNION DEMONSTRATION AT MANCHESTER IN FAVOUR OF THE LABOURERS

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—SEPTEMBER 5, 1874.



“GIVE AND TAKE.”

CERES (to Farmer and Labourer). “MY HARVEST GIFTS! TAKE—AND SHARE FAIRLY.”

proper distribution of wages, and by using her the Punch cartoonist brings together nature and politics, even though in an abstract presentation.

.....oOo.....

In this analysis of the 1874 strike and lockout, Clifford remains the most interesting and significant of the writers and artists. There is only one other example of a writer within the quality press where the experience of being in the country changes the viewpoint and the language of the writer. (c.f. chapter 9). Although Clifford's work was presented in The Times, which had an impact upon contemporary readers and writers, his contribution remains individual. His reports did not influence any other writer into a new form or a sympathetic perception such as his own. But his writings were a significant contribution to the "knowledge" of the labourer shown in the quality press at this time.

The illustrations in Graphic and Punch, together with The Times' letters, place Clifford's contributions in context and mark his uniqueness. Lady Stradbroke in particular reveals the dominance of the aesthetic leisure interest in nature. That powerful view lies behind the assumption that "paid agitators" came from outside the country and influenced the labourer against his will, held by Lady Stradbroke and others. Such a view contained the belief that the country was innocent, and this innocence, represented by the gullibility of the labourer, was being corrupted by the wordly and political city, represented by

the agitators, who were 'paid' rather than inspired. There is also present in that view the myth of the stranger who traditionally brought disruption. Her assumptions, which were held by the majority of The Times' readers, show how that leisure interest when carried over into a political context, proved most conservative and hostile to the labourer.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Six

- (1) Frederick Clifford (1828-1904) joined the staff of The Times in 1852 after four years' experience of provincial journalism. He also worked for Sheffield Daily Telegraph and in 1863 became joint proprietor of that paper with Sir W. C. Leng. He became a lawyer in 1859 and in 1868 helped to form the Press Association.
- (2) There were three Unions involved in the dispute. The National and the Federal Unions and the Lincolnshire Labour League.
- (3) Haysel was a local word for hay harvest which was quickly taken up and used by reporters.
- (4) Jones, Rev. H. The Times Apr. 29 1874 p. 14
- (5) ibid. p. 14
- (6) ibid. p. 14
- (7) ibid. p. 14
- (8) The Times May 2 1874 p. 5
- (9) Even the fact that the National Union kept its headquarters in Leamington, Warwickshire, did not seem to deter writers from associating them with cities.
- (10) c.f. The Times Apr. 23 1874 p. 10
- (11) c.f. Canon Girdlestone's migration scheme, Chapter Seven
- (12) The Times Apr. 7 1874 p. 4
- (13) The Times Apr. 15 1874 p. 12
- (14) The Times Apr. 30 1874 p. 12
- (15) The Times Apr. 30 1874 p. 12
- (16) The Times May 1 1874 p. 12
- (17) The Times May 5 1874 p. 13
- (18) The Times May 7 1874 p. 8
- (19) The Times May 23 1874 p. 10
- (20) The Times Apr. 14 1874 p. 10
- (21) c.f. Dunbabin, J.P.D. Rural Discontent in the 19th Century London 1974 Chapter IV "The Rise and Fall of Agricultural Trades Unionism in England" p. 79 where he maintains that the copralite mines in the eastern counties were deliberately closed in order to release casual labour for the farmers.

- (22) The Times Apr. 24 1874 p. 10
- (23) One example of his initial ignorance and distance from the labourers' unions is found in his failure to recognise the teetotal element in the National Union leaders. At the beginning of his stay in East Anglia Clifford frequently drew attention to the part-payment of wages in beer and expressed a wish that the Union would divert its attention from higher wages to this particular issue, showing his assumption that the Unionists enjoyed and wished to preserve this kind of non-money earning.
- (24) Some of these were formed in 1873 when a demand for a shilling a week rise was met. They were local leagues, but grew and amalgamated as the dispute continued.
- (25) The Times Apr. 15 1874 p. 12 an account of a farmers' meeting.
- (26) These usually meant new cottages, but the implication was that they were far better than the old ones, and had several bedrooms.
- (27) The Times May 25 1874 p. 9 from Ipswich
- (28) The Times Apr. 15 1874 p. 12 from Newmarket
- (29) The Times Apr. 20 1874 p. 12 from Cambridge
- (30) The Times Apr. 10 1874 p. 10
- (31) The Times Apr. 11 1874 p. 5
- (32) The Times Apr. 22 1874 p. 10 from Cambridge
- (33) The Times Apr. 15 1874 p. 12 from Newmarket
- (34) ibid. p. 12
- (35) The Times Apr. 25 1874 p. 10
- (36) ibid. p. 10
- (37) ibid. p. 10
- (38) Mr Brand was Sir Henry Brand, current speaker for the House of Commons.
- (39) The Times Apr. 18 1874 p. 5. There was no lockout on his estates.
- (40) They did not gain the increase in wages which was the initial cause of the strike.
- (41) The Times Jul. 14 1874 p. 10
- (42) The Times Apr. 2 1874 p. 7

- (43) Lord Lt. of Suffolk, the Earl of Stradbroke held the largest estate in Suffolk, centred around Ipswich. Clifford wrote of a village named Stradbroke and referred to its absentee landlord. Stradbroke himself was 80 in 1874, which explains why his younger wife (aged 44) wrote this reply to the Bishop.
- (44) The Times Apr. 16 1874 p. 10
- (45) ibid. p. 10
- (46) Once Defence Leagues were formed, it was possible for a lockout to be called in an area where Union men had not called a strike. Strategically this was a good move for the farmers as the Unions' were weakened. They paid the locked out men 9/- a week, and were deprived of their Union subscriptions.
- (47) The demand for 13/- a week (this was the average ceiling, though some instances of a demand for 21/- a week did occur in Lincolnshire) represented the flat rate, all year round wage. The Unions' demanded this as a security against winter lay offs. Summer work was usually given by the piece.
- (48) Stradbroke, op.cit. p. 10
- (49) ibid. p. 10
- (50) ibid. p. 10
- (51) ibid. p. 10
- (52) ibid. p. 10
- (53) The Times Apr. 17 1874 p. 12
- (54) The Times Apr. 20 1874 p. 12
- (55) The Times May 25 1874 p. 9
- (56) c.f. Chapter Seven
- (57) Anon. "Rural Notes" Graphic Apr. 17 1874 p. 389
- (58) This could possibly be a pun on all-dread.

Eye-witnesses

Rural clergymen had more than a leisure interest in the "plight" of the labourer, they had a moral duty. The labourers were their flock and the needs, spiritual and material, of the labourers were their concern. During the period 1860-1890, rural clergymen contributed eye-witness information to the debate on the labourers in the quality journals and newspapers. Four such eye-witnesses will be discussed here. Two were active campaigners on behalf of their flock: Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne,⁽¹⁾ better known as SGO of The Times, and Canon Edward Girdlestone,⁽²⁾ the "Friend" of the agricultural labourer. How they fought for reforms, and what they thought were the labourer's needs will be discussed first. The two less active eye-witnesses are Charles Kegan Paul, drawing on the period in his career when he was both rural clergyman and village school headmaster, and the Reverend Augustus Jessopp, who wrote regular articles on rural life for 19th Century. All four writers claimed sympathy with the "plight" of the labourer.

Although the twenty years encompassed by these eye-witnesses covered great changes in rural life, the writers each argued persuasively and sincerely for new cottages for the labourers. Judging from their journal contributions, few cottages could have been built during the entire twenty years.⁽³⁾ But there was another reason for rural clergymen to support the labourer

over housing in particular. Although wages and conditions of work were equally in need of reform, housing was a safer area of debate and the decent cottage a more appealing symbol. To campaign for decent housing could bring the writers into conflict with the rural hierarchy, and with their own peer group, but it did not require a change of political allegiance. To support the labourers' unions required stepping further and further towards Radicalism in order to keep up with the unions' own movements during the period. Between 1872 and 1874, the labourers' unions were relatively independent, only slightly leaning on Radical interests, but by 1883 they were firmly in the Radical wing of the Liberal Party.⁽⁴⁾ This shift in politics meant they moved far away from their mentors in the village, so that even those rural clergymen who actively supported unionisation, like Girdlestone, felt unable to follow the unions into the Liberal Party.

These eye-witnesses from the country, writing to the city press claimed to be friends of the labourers. There were few contributions from clergymen to the journals which did not support the labourer in some way. Only one, written under a pseudonym: "A Wykehamist", but by the Reverend George Jennings Davis, came close to condemnation of the labourers. However, he did not directly condemn them, only indirectly, through his attack on Joseph Arch.

Davis wrote three articles in a series for Fraser's in 1873. The first article opened with: "There were kings before Agamemnon, but there never was a president of a labourer's union

before Joseph Arch" and that tone of ironic dismissal was kept up throughout his contributions on "The Peasantry of the South of England". The following quotation shows his style:

Mr Arch has great physical powers of voice and utterance, and he speaks in short, terse, Anglo-Saxon sentences, which enable him to be heard at a great distance. The writer of this one evening last summer was at a quarter of a mile from a spot where Joseph Arch was addressing a meeting from a wagon and can vouch for having caught a sentence here and there of his address.
(5)

It is interesting to note that when these three articles were printed as a pamphlet, the title was changed to "The Agricultural Labourer of the South of England". No such sensitivity to the labourer was shown in the body of the work, however, as that shift in title might suggest. Mostly Davis was interested in dismissing a recent biography of Arch, as he disliked his presentation there as a "hero". He had little sympathy with the labourer, as his comment on Arch's early work when a child at "crow-scaring at fourpence a day" testified. All Davis could say was that it accounted "for his excellent lungs - the exercise of Demosthenes on the seashore shouting to the waves was nothing as a preparation for oratory compared to Arch shouting at the Warwickshire rooks". The roughness of his tone evokes something of the huntsman's joke. Davis, too, considered himself to be a friend of the labourer. He did not however approve of unionisation.

Support from the rural clergy for unionisation hinged upon how high, low or broad⁽⁶⁾ church were the ecclesiastic allegiances of the writer. The strong Methodist element in the National Union leaders influenced the clergy both for and against. But :

even the most antagonistic, like Davis, joined in praise for Arch's teetotalism. This aspect of his religion was always seen as a good point in a leader of an agricultural labourers' union.

Rural clergymen were considered to be excellent eye-witnesses by the Royal Commission on Women and Children in Agriculture. (7) The Bishop of Manchester, himself a supporter of the National Union, headed that investigation, and his fellow clergymen contributed extensively to its findings. The following extracts show something of their close contact with their parishioners:

Great demoralisation takes place from the want of sufficient bedrooms to the cottages where large families reside. Two instances in this parish are most marked, three girls in one family, and two in another having illegitimate children: only one bedroom in each cottage.

Rev. Richard Bond,
Rector, Pulham St Mary Virgin.

Ventilation very bad; windows very low in upstairs rooms and great accumulation of foul air between windows and roof. Drains nothing but open ditches, or holes cleaned out occasionally for the sake of the deposit. Water very impure from ponds and ditches.

Rev. J.W. Millard,
Rector, Shrimpling.

One rector interviewed a parishioner: Harriet Wensdale, a labourer's wife from the village of Gissing:

I heard the woman read nicely. In her neighbour's cottage is a family of six children (one room, one lean-to) all at home (as wild a brood as I ever saw) the only learning any of them can get is at the Wesleyan Chapel.

Three new cottages lately built in Attlebridge are almost models.... The others are detestable, and must sooner or later be pulled down; some of them, with large families, have but one sleeping room.

Rev. C. Wodehouse,
Alderford-cum-Attlebridge.

In several districts since I have been rector of this parish I have had to complain of overcrowding, but at present there is only one instance but that of the grossest kind.... the sleeping accommodation is the greatest want - many have only one room, and none three... Wells... is (sic) the rule of water supply, but you will frequently find the muck hole close to it.

Rev. Hind Howell,
Vice-Chairman of Board of
Guardians,
Drayton.

A great drawback to many cottages in Upper Hellesdon is the want of sufficient garden ground.... I do not consider the number of privies or apologies for such, sufficient.

Rev. W.E. Best,
Hellesdon. (8)

All these contributors sound well informed, good observers and interested in the welfare of their flock. These were good qualities in eye-witness reporters. The clergyman who asked the labourer's wife to read to him shows his authority in the village and his interest in education is manifest even from that short extract. Of course, the rural clergy were responsible for the only village schooling available long before the 1870 Education Act. On the debit side of their work in the village they were also in control of the allocation of allotments, and could deprive the labourer of this source of cheap food for drunkenness and, as was revealed in the previous chapter, for union allegiance, if they wished.

SGO

Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne was brother to the Duke of Leeds and received the usual Rugby and Oxford education. His marriage brought him into the intelligentsia, giving him as brothers-in-law both Charles Kingsley⁽⁹⁾ and J.A. Froude.⁽¹⁰⁾ He was also a close friend of Edwin Chadwick⁽¹¹⁾ and was obviously influenced by his sanitary reforms. SGO, therefore, was no insignificant rector, stranded in the country, but a rich and influential man with a pedigree, and connections, all of which gave added weight to his voice.

His letters to The Times spanned the years 1844-1888 and were republished the year after his death in a shortened version which ran to two volumes. The subject matter of these letters was wide. In fact, it seemed as if SGO wrote on every topical question of the day: free trade, education, sanitation, women's rights, cattle plague, cholera, Ireland, The Crimea, hospitals, and Florence Nightingale. He said himself that his interest in criminality, especially in female murderers was "almost depraved".⁽¹²⁾ But he remains best known for his letters on the subject of agricultural labourers and their cottages. Present historians remember him for his early forecast of labourers' unionisation. The editor of his letters remembered the initial response to his campaign for the labourers:

At the outset of his campaign against the foul dwellings provided for agricultural labourers, his clients neither understood nor appreciated him. The farmers regarded him with suspicion, and even with hostility. His relations with some of the landowners of Dorset were for a time strained by the unflattering sincerity with which he pointed out their shortcomings, and the costly nature of the measures he insisted on their adopting. Labourers, farmers, landowners alike regarded his actions as pestilent interference; and thus he encountered a storm of his own raising none the easier to bear on account of its origin.

(13)

According to D.C. Lathbury's criterion for the adequacy of reforms on behalf of the labourer, SGO failed in his work, for Lathbury felt that if reforms in rural areas had been successful, then the labourers would value the work done on their behalf. It seems that they did not appreciate SGO, but he was undaunted by this lack of appreciation from those he felt he was assisting.

He wrote so regularly to The Times that he became known as a correspondent. His letters were given bold type and editorial backing. The Times occasionally used him in leaders, maintaining his pseudonym, but as he was always an amateur, his title of correspondent was a courtesy. He made no attempt to carry his campaigns to the journals although some of his letters were republished in pamphlet form.⁽¹⁴⁾ His editor claimed SGO wrote lay sermons in his letters and pointed out that he was not a literary man.⁽¹⁵⁾ SGO is quite clearly a 'public' writer who did not attempt to enter the more private world of the journals, despite the fact that one of his brothers-in-law, Froude, was editor of Fraser's.

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SGO's language shows his second major hobby after letter-writing, which was botany. He was also fond of a rather jocular fictional style which took the form of 'joke' names. But first the eye-witness quality of his letters must be charted:

I am quite sure in several villages known to myself, within an easy ride of my own residence, were I to obtain and publish the state of the dwellings and what can be proved as the result of that state, it would horrify every thinking man and woman possessed of the commonest humanity, the least respect for common decency. If I saw the possessors of the properties on which things are thus poor men, or even embarrassed men, whose way of living indicated their poverty and helplessness in the matter, I should grieve over the fact and be silent: but, it is no such thing: these things often are most evident on properties where the savage heathenish domestic features of the labourer's dwellings are in awful contrast with the glaring evidence that the owner of the soil can and does live in the most extravagant enjoyment of all that wealth can command.

(16)

I once knew a row of cottages in a healthy village, in which there were repeated cases of low fever; the gardens were close up to the doors; the only accessible cesspools were just the distance which the poor call, not convenient for such conveniences. I ascertained the mothers and daughters who did the housework were accustomed to bring out slops of all descriptions to their doors, take two strides, and then jerk the stuff as far as they could into the garden. The result was, the soil for some nine feet or so (a woman, strong in the arm, can only jerk the contents of a vessel three feet) was saturated with mixed noxious matters. I advised during the fever, keeping the soil twelve feet from the houses, covered with quick lime; the fever abated, certain sanitary alterations were made, I have never heard of a case in the same locality since.

(17)

Here let me relate a fact within my own knowledge. When the cholera first broke out in the country, several children died of it very near a school for the poor, many of the scholars living in the houses where the disease had appeared. A common sense clergyman took measure to administer a certain small amount of chalk mixture with opium to each child in school every day, giving them also a luncheon of plain boiled rice, with treacle. The result was a good many complaints of pain in the head, some breaking out at the nose and lips of rather unpleasant sores, a rather general fractiousness; but in no case was a child attacked with cholera.

(18)

Some years ago - there are those now living who will well remember it - a man and his son took a load of straw to London to sell, to return with a load of London stable dung. The distance was about twenty-two miles. The boy got tired, and lay down to sleep on top of the dung. Within twenty-four hours of his return home he was seized with the symptoms of low fever; it became malignant typhus, spread through the cottage and into the next. I never saw such malignant cases before or since. I think three died at once; one was saved, I dare say is now alive, who went through all the worst stages of the disease. We took active measures with soap, lime, etc., to cleanse all the houses near; we had not another case on that spot.....

(19)

Several things can be deduced from these eye-witness reports by SGO. First, he had a good eye for detail, knowing precisely, as he claimed, how far a woman could throw the slops from the door, and just how many steps from that door she took. His interest in science, and how that interest merged into an interest in medicine, can also be seen. The stories, rather than reports, for his style is anecdotal, sound a little dated. It must be remembered that SGO began his writing career in 1844, these extracts are from letters in the 1860s. The phrases "I once knew" and "some years ago" are therefore understandable. The most clear element in these stories

is the authority and influence of clergymen. That SGO was a wealthy man is seen from his reference to his own secluded residence which was at a distance from his parish sufficient to require his riding to see his flock.⁽²⁰⁾ He was no poor parson. But he was also stern on the question of luxury as the attack on landowners who enjoy "extravagant" wealth and yet left their labourers to dwell in "savage, heathenish domestic features" testifies.

SGO's scientific and medical detachment was a part of his love of botany. He used similes from plant life when presenting the labourer's case to the readers of The Times. "Species", for instance, was a word he often used for the labourer, and it carries the 'objectivity' of the scientific view of nature:

Your forcing houses are expensive to build and to support, but you want the fruit. Can you do without Hodge and Rebecca? What is your land to you without the labour to till it? You must build to preserve labour - build at some cost, to force out upon the estate good specimens of the Hodge and Rebecca fruit. (21)

A boy who has profited thus much from a school, at the age of eleven or twelve, will have done well; he will be a very favourable specimen of an educated labourer's son. (22)

Above all, let every well-wisher to these institutions encourage the members to work out their own system, to carry out unaided their own regulations; to be healthy, they need to be strong-rooted and closely tended; too much patronage runs them to all stalk. (23)

Hitherto, in a very large proportion of cases, the farm staff has been of local breeding and training... the employers... know their breed, their habits, their exact value. (24)

We are reaping a crop we have taken great pains to sow; the preparation of the soil was, and is yet, a very expensive process. (education leading to unionisation) (25)

The tilled garden is fast producing the crop sown; in its ripening, it affords ample evidence of the nature of the seed; its fruit is just which such seed, under such tillage, was certain to produce.

(crime and bad housing) (26)

The term Hodge, and the invented term for his wife, Rebecca, puts SGO's friendship with the labourer in perspective. Despite his close observations he was not a close friend. It can be seen why his editor felt that the labourers themselves did not appreciate his friendship. His arguments for good cottages, addressed to the landowning class are couched in scientific/economic terms. He uses the analogy of glass houses or forcing houses for both good and bad effects. In one example, Hodge and Rebecca become exotic fruits, forced from good housing (their forcing or glass house) onto the estate to till the land and so become a part of the crop of the estate, like the fruit grown in the glass houses. Good fruit came from good glass houses and therefore, good labour would come from well housed labourers. The warning notes in the two latter extracts from his letters all sound the opposite interpretation of his analogy. 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap'. This Biblical phrase runs through the last two extracts. The expensive crop from education will be unionisation, he warned, for if the labourer is not well housed, he will, through increased education learn how to pay back the negligent landowner by forming a union.

SGO predicted unionisation but only in this form, as a regrettable consequence of neglect. The "tilled garden" extract is a deterministic parable for the growth of crime from bad housing.

It is also clear that SGO wrote quickly and without revision in his letters to The Times and this element in his writing must be borne in mind in any analysis. So too must his habit of calling not just the labourer by stock names, but also all other 'characters' who peopled his letters. He called the female domestic servant "Mary Duster" for instance⁽²⁷⁾ and the butler "Mr Coolwine"⁽²⁸⁾ or "James".⁽²⁹⁾ The gamekeeper was "Dick Partridge".⁽³⁰⁾ The labourer was given several of these pseudo-Dickensian names. He was "old Bill Ploughshare"⁽³¹⁾ and "that poor cripple Sam Hopscotch"⁽³²⁾ for example. His son was "Jobus"⁽³³⁾ and his widow "Widow Grey".⁽³⁴⁾ In a simile between a kennel and a labourer's cottage, in which the kennel came out best, he called the dog "Juno"⁽³⁵⁾ and the labourer "Giles".⁽³⁶⁾ On one occasion he reshaped Hodge and Rebecca into "Hodge and Clodge".⁽³⁷⁾

All these names make SGO's village sound like Toytown. It is not that he was remote from his parish, only from his parishioners. These terms indicate distance.

It is true he did use similar terms for those in his own peer group, such as "Reverend Surplice"⁽³⁸⁾ and "Lord Manyacres"⁽³⁹⁾ but they are the only references. The labourers were constantly treated to these jocular references which make it sound as if SGO never spoke to his friends at all. It seems he observed them and, not liking what he saw, sought to improve their conditions. His determinism prevented him from seeking to improve the labourers themselves, only their material circumstances. He campaigned for decent cottages and better sanitation, confident that the inhabitants would improve as their external circumstances improved.

SGO showed more insight into the landowning class than into the labourers', and this insight is revealed in his tirade against picturesque cottages. Despite his lack of close contact with the labourers, he felt he could speak for them over housing:

Hodge and Rebecca don't cry out for the picturesque, they are on this dwelling question easily satisfied; they don't like being styed; they with reason ask to be housed.

(40)

But although he deplored the picturesque cottage, he could understand the reason for its appearance:

There is much unnecessary ornament, too much spent in the picturesque. I speak now not of the furniture cottages, those seen from the house or abutting on the park - these I regard as part of the dress of the estate; its brick pets. The dwellings I would wish to see built in a plain style as plain as possible, are the cottages of the general farm staff. (41)

Another letter put forward a further argument taken from the aesthetic view of nature. Although he condemned it, the extract does show how well aware SGO was of ^{the} presence of an accepted aesthetic view and how prevalent that view was amongst landowners:

I can quite understand a landed proprietor arguing after this fashion... I want space without population: villages are nuisances, the children pull the hedges, the labourers make paths and poach, there is always somebody begging for something, where there is a village; then there are fevers and things of that sort. Why should I create dwellings, when I want to avoid having dwellers? I offer wages and get the men for the day, they go home elsewhere at night. Because this is hard on these, am I to sacrifice my own view, and plant families about the place, to my own annoyance? This style of argument would, I fear, be credited, however little creditable; true, the great owning interest would rise as one man to repudiate it; but I fear the denial might only raise a smile, it would not carry conviction. (42)

SGO knew his own class well and was capable of honestly attacking them, as his editor claimed. But as can be seen, the labourers themselves were not present in his campaigns on their behalf. He neither quoted them, nor presented them as real people within his letters.

It comes as something of a surprise to learn from the edited version of his letters that SGO wrote one letter purporting to be written by "Seven Dorset Labourers at Midday Tea at Rushbottom Farm". The letter was dated 26th April, 1866, and is a complaint against recent parliamentary legislation which would make paper cheap but not lower the price of tea.

That SGO was the author of this letter was not revealed until his letters were published in 1898. The editor stated that the fake letter was alluded to "in the House of Commons by Mr Walpole, and was generally attributed to Mr Haliburton".⁽⁴³⁾ It is therefore clear that SGO's contemporaries were not taken in by the signature of seven Dorset labourers. But there is no reference to SGO's use of a pseudonym, nor why he let another man be given the 'glory' of the fiction. However it is through the letter that we learn of his image of the labourer:

We want to say a word for ourselves. We are only common labouring men... we eat hearty; our children like rooks after plough, are always looking for grub when the cupboard door is open, loaves are very dear, and among us we consume many; the potatoes were digged few, small and the most of them rotten. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

SGO did not attempt to put his representation into dialect, but contented himself with authenticity in expressions "like rooks after plough" and in the disjointed grammar and thought sequences. It is not clear for instance if "we eat hearty" means we would like to eat hearty, as the subsequent reference to the price of bread and the bad potato crop could suggest. The seven labourers make statements in their letter as to their hardship but they were not made in the form of complaints. Instead, SGO wrote in their name in a tone of acceptance:

Butter and milk aint within our reach at all. We dont ask the Parliament gentlemen for cheap sugar - we've learned to do without it; our children dont ask for sweets. Bread is now so up that six days sweat dont fill the three shelves, two or three year ago it filled five of them, and there was a bit of bacon besides and there were a good heap of potatoes in the back place.

(45)

Such bare statements, and the reference to better times past combine to convey pathos, not threats. SGO revealed how the labourers got their information on the outside world:

Brewer's clerk tell us... shop folk tell us... folk do say that... many of our single folk of the farm get the Ramfold Express our newspaper, for a penny a week; they club to take it in.

(46)

It was in this paper, say the labourers, that they discovered that paper would be made cheaper, but not tea. They decided to write to The Times in part because of SGO, said SGO:

One of us minds a man down here who wrote to Times and spoke up for us, so we got up this, and send it, hoping you will let us have our say, down on your paper.

(47)

(It may perhaps have been this section which led SGO to keep quiet about his unusual letter). Their "say" is a plea for cheaper tea:

Do, sir, say a word for us down on your big paper (my boy carries it up to parson from post every day). We poor folk use little paper anyway, it aint either meat, drink or lodging to us.... if times get very good again, and taxes were less upon our tea drink, we should not grudge paper being ever so cheap, that we poor could use it after our way just as gentlefolks. But we dont put the wrapper of our ounce into teapot; we cant turn it to no profit.

(48)

SGO did not make them ask for higher wages, so they could afford the price of tea. Nor, significantly, did he make them ask for the decent cottages he required for them, and so verify his own complaints. Instead of feeling they were hard done by, SGO's labourers were sympathetic to the farmers' position;

The masters are all down o' the mouth and true enough they have had bad times lately we see no hope of better wages.

(49)

In all, nothing was said that would be disagreeable to SGO. In his view, the labourers also saw the value of education, but for later, when their material circumstances had improved. They saw better wages as a matter quite outside their control. They were not presented as seeing any sting in their clubbing together to afford a penny paper a week while parson had his Times delivered for him every day. SGO saw no important revelation in the juxtaposition of those two facts in his letter. The labourers he created did not intend irony. Their tone was 'manly' but not independent. They liked the decent paternalism which looked

after them and could speak for them. They were only driven to speak for themselves because they claimed their village lacked an SGO:

We are very quiet, hard working folks; there be few to speak up for ourselves, even if we know'd how. We aint town folk, they can talk out and get helped. Do, sir, say a word for us about the teapot, it is always a-brewing and there isnt nothing which makes a greater cry in our houses than when the teas are not to be had by all, young and old.

Put this in, we will bless you.

(50)

They said that "tea is more to us than all the wines and beers is to the gentlefolk" and that only "the single ones of us may get a drop of beer a day, many of us scarce ever tastes it".

The picture is of hardworking, humble folk, teetotal, family-orientated, God-fearing and polite to their superiors. They knew their place and to a certain extent are shown as knowing their rights, in that they could write and publicise their needs when no-one else did. They had wanted "parson to write to chancellor of the chequers about it, but he aint a interfering man".

This letter reveals SGO's image of the labourer. It contrasts sharply with his editor's report that the labourers did not care for his 'interference' on their behalf. It contains no reference to unionisation, not even as a threat or a fear. It is different to the stock, almost comic, figures of "Hodge and Clodge" SGO used, and different again to the labourers seen by other rural clergymen to be discussed in this chapter.

Canon Girdlestone

Canon Edward Girdlestone not only campaigned on behalf of the labourer for decent housing, he also arranged a migration programme for the labourers of his own parish in an attempt to find them an increased wage. He too recognised that building cottages was uneconomic, but saw this in the context of the low wages paid to the labourer which would not cover a realistic rent. His migration scheme was successful and over six years he arranged for four to five hundred families to move from Devon to Lancashire where farm work was higher paid. He wrote to The Times intermittently during the 1860s and it was as a result of his letter of Sep. 25 1866 that the migration scheme began. Referring to the anti-slave trade movement, he pointed out that "There were white slaves in England as well as black slaves elsewhere" and asked "Could not more facilities be contrived for the removal of agricultural labourers from places where there are too many to places where there are too few"⁽⁵¹⁾ as one of a list of questions put to readers concerning the plight of the agricultural labourers. In reply, he received offers of farm work from the higher paid, understaffed north of England, and so began his migration scheme. His letters to The Times became dominated by this practical issue and he asked for offers of employment and for donations to pay for the travel of the migrating labourers.

Criticism of his ambitious scheme came via The Times' letter column, disputing his eye-witness reports,⁽⁵²⁾ and more came from the farmers in his own area. But after he had preached

in his church that a cattle plague in his vicinity was a visitation from God on the farmers for their neglect of the labourers, it can be seen that local bad feeling was not entirely caused by his work in a London newspaper. He reported back to The Times both his successes and his trials. One great triumph was the local rise in wages from eleven shillings to twelve shillings a week once fifty families had been removed. This he felt, was the law of supply and demand properly working for the labourers at long last. Of his trials, he told readers that some farmers had been "manly and pleasant"⁽⁵³⁾ but other had refused to pay both the church rate and their contributions to the village school. Others had turned Methodist in disgust and left his church. Moreover, his wife and daughters had been treated as social outcasts. Girdlestone was proud of his work despite the aggression it caused but he felt that a union could and would do more than he. "What little I have done will, I hope, be further developed and made permanent by the formation of an Agricultural Labourers Union for All England", he wrote.⁽⁵³⁾

Unlike SGO, Girdlestone's closest connections were with the labourers he championed. Like the Bishop of Manchester, he too could see that the stock figure of the slow-moving country worker was in fact a shameful reminder of his ill treatment: "... there can be no doubt that the proverbial sleepiness and sloth of agricultural work are in a great degree due to sheer lack of vital force". He claimed that the slow work was caused by the labourer being "half starved".⁽⁵⁴⁾

Girdlestone's eye-witness reports were written from a closer viewpoint than SGO's and as a consequence he saw a different labourer. However, his closer contact did not make his writings in the journals more anecdotal. Instead he used his personal knowledge in a factual way, preferring to state: "The following is a correct detailed account of the condition of an agricultural labourer in North Devon"⁽⁵⁵⁾ before going on to give statistics relating to wages and non-money earnings.

Even recollections were presented in a footnote, such as the comment taken from a farmer at "a ploughing match dinner at Halberton on October 28th last"⁽⁵⁶⁾ which was given seventeen lines of fine print. Girdlestone's campaigning work was marked by such detailed and well organised touches:

This description of the condition of agricultural labourers in North Devon is not based upon information obtained from interested parties or at second or third rate, or upon a hasty personal visit. It is the result of the experience of a six years' residence in a parish of 7,600 acres and 1,663 people, in every farmhouse and cottage of which the author has been many times a year at almost every hour of the day, and with the habits and circumstances of whose inmates he is nearly as familiar as with those of his own household, and it is notorious that this is a fair average of the whole district.

(57)

Girdlestone's style is well illustrated by the two long and rather breathless sentences. Less detailed assertions than the above appeared in each of his journal articles. Each time they herald factual statements. "Landowners, Land and Those Who Till it" for example, contains the following:

Thus in the parts of England in which the author has had practical experience...

It is only they who have been in the habit of penetrating inside these cottages at all hours and becoming familiar with the lives and habits of the inmates, who are qualified to paint a correct picture...

This sort of personal experience...

The author last year paid £33 7s. 11d towards the support of the parish schools...

(58)

These are a lot of authenticating details for one article. SGO, resting on his own class superiority, never seemed to feel the need to present himself as if anticipating attack. Indeed, the criticisms received by SGO are not referred to by name in his letters; it was his editor who made the reference to them. Girdlestone however, as well as informing The Times readers of his unfair treatment at the hands of local farmers, also told journal readers how badly the farmers behaved over the migration scheme. For he stated, "even when the labourers are willing, the farmers put every possible obstacle in the way of removal, one of the most unfair and perplexing of which was the refusal to give any sort of character". (59)

Girdlestone's views caused him to be stripped of his power in the village. He complained of being shut out from the administration of the poor laws, but not because the Guardians (farmers and landowners) had taken action against him. Girdlestone did not appear to realise that he was probably alone in his position:

The clergy, who know more about the poor than any one else and have not any reason for being more partial to one family than another, though ex-officio guardians of the poor, are virtually excluded.

(60)

Leaving aside any psychological reading, Girdlestone's eye-witness statements reveal his practical intelligence. He was capable of forethought as, for example, his letter to The Times on 28th October 1869 shows, where he asked that the railways consider the migrating labourer going from west to north before they fix their timetables. Despite this sagacity, he obviously aroused intense dislike for himself from his farming neighbours but not, interestingly, from the landowners, for these he seldom mentioned.

Girdlestone's closer view, as opposed to SGO's, make his writings an easier medium for an analysis of his image of the labourers than was the case with the older campaigner. SGO's ideal labourers appeared only once and then in a fake letter to The Times. His ideal was presented in those respectful and deferential sober Dorsetshire labourers. Girdlestone's labourers were different, but no less ideal. His labourer was a man of high standards:

The detestable patronage which is now so frequently bestowed by the gentry, clergy and farmers upon the agricultural labourer ... would under union die a natural death ... but though he would in union cease to be a slave, the labourer would remain as respectful as ever to those above him, as grateful as ever, not for patronage, but for real Christian kindness and help, a better educated, more faithful, willing, intelligent, able servant than ever before ... United farm labourers means stronger, more intelligent better labourers.

(62)

These generalised labourers bear a strong resemblance to Girdlestone's presentation of Joseph Arch, whom he greatly admired:

Mr Arch, being not only clever, eloquent, and of good administrative capacity, but an honest, upright, unselfish, sober, religious man....

(62)

Like Arch, Girdlestone felt that the outside of the summer cottage deluded the commentators from the city on the agricultural labourer. He, too, wished for a closer look to be taken inside the cottage, where the picturesque would give way to misery "concealed from common observation". (63)

His first articles flesh out the image of the sober and thrifty labourer whom he gave so much of himself to help. Education for instance was desired by the ideal labourer:

Nor is it likely that the labourer will be more temperate, moral, provident, enterprising, and in a word, independent, till he can at least read with ease and pleasure, and so have it in his power to inform himself of what is being done in other countries, as well as in different parts of his own.

(64)

Girdlestone could see that there were some labourers who did not want education and he dealt with those deviants by dismissing them for being corrupted by drink. They could not help themselves;

Of course some would rather not have it. But these are chiefly the dissipated and unthrifty who are stimulated by the amount of liquor allowed them to crave for and obtain more at the public house or beer and cider shop.

(65)

It was the farmer, in Girdlestone's view, who began the craving for alcohol, not only by giving beer in part-payment of wages, but by depriving the labourer of milk. The labourer was denied room to keep a cow himself, and farmers, through efficient marketing and increased production of butter and cheese, also denied the labourer and his family access to cheap milk in the village. Arch's teetotalism was endorsed by Girdlestone, whose ideal labourer also did not drink, unlike the "dissipated, unthrifty" ones. Girdlestone was also dismissive about those labourers who returned to their old villages after they had been removed by his migration scheme. He said himself that the labourers were reluctant to go to the north and admitted that some came back despite the higher wages paid to them elsewhere. He considered that those who returned were the ne'er-do-wells of the village and had been rejected by their new employers. He did not think that such an action by the labourer might be the independence he required. His ideal labourer only stayed at home because he had been demoralised by the farmer:

For lack of knowledge, enterprise, and money and in consequence of his spirit being almost quenched within him by his overwhelming difficulties, generally speaking he has but scantily availed himself of those advantages of ready and comparatively inexpensive locomotion which the railway offers to all, and through the instrumentality of which almost every other class has more or less bettered itself.

(66)

The ideal labourer also held strong moral principles, but in his depressed state these were in need of a helping hand to be fully seen. The cottage, overcrowded with only one bedroom, was therefore an anathema to Girdlestone as it was to SGO. Although SGO also stressed the moral unhealthiness of an entire family sleeping in one room, he had, because of his interest in scientific objectivity, stressed as well the physical unhealthiness of such a situation. Girdlestone did not consider this aspect at all, so overshadowed was it by the moral implications:

How can chastity be looked for amongst the young women, or self respect amongst the men, when both sexes, as is often the case, are like swine crowded together to dress, undress and sleep in the same room.

(67)

He took such close living further and also traced "ruin"⁽⁶⁸⁾ for the female agricultural labourer from hiring fairs and 'mops' and village benefit processions and meals, in fact from all areas where the labourers were grouped together in a mass. Girdlestone preferred his ideal labourer to be separated into a small family group and he considered that the labourers also preferred to be as private as he did himself. Again, his idea of independence could not extend to allow the labourers an independent pleasure not shared by him, which they enjoyed when drinking, dancing or mixing, men and women together, on collective occasions.

In order to prove his point against holidays and festivals being set around the public house, he quoted a labourer to verify. This labourer appeared to be in Girdlestone's own employ:

'John', said I, the morning after Club Day, to one of my men, a month or two ago, it was a fine day yesterday, and I hope you enjoyed your holiday'. 'Why ye see, master', he replied, 'it warn't much of a holiday. We tramped till our feet were sore, and we sweated more than if we had been in the field, and we had nought to eat till past four o'clock and when we got it we were too tired to eat it. It was hard work, I can tell you.'

(69)

I do not think Girdlestone meant his extract to be read as a parody of master-man relations. It is a quotation used to verify his own beliefs. There is however laconic humour in the labourer's statement and a delight in complaining. Girdlestone missed both qualities and heard only what he wanted to hear. He did not want to deny the labourer a holiday but it must be taken in a single family group, not collectively:

... surely for that sum, in these days of cheap locomotion, the labourer might secure a much pleasanter holiday, not only for himself, but for some of his family with him.

(70)

Despite holding these views, Girdlestone was very much in favour of labourers' unions, and gathering together for that purpose had his approval. Girdlestone called for unionisation for the labourer in 1868, and promised it as a positive hope for them, rather than gloomily predicting it as did SGO. All his work for the labourers encompassed the union and he spoke for it in the "quality" journals with an enthusiasm which was sometimes millennial in tone: "The die is cast. The word has been spoken. The order has gone forth. And so far God has blessed the movement".⁽⁷¹⁾ His second article for Macmillans in 1873 indicates why the National Union rejected his friendship. There he set out

practical and achievable goals for the Union which would result in a better life for the labourers. These concerned housing, wages and work conditions. Although Girdlestone had campaigned for higher wages for sometime, he revealed in this article his opposition to a fixed rate for hours or wages, except, perhaps, a minimum wage. He wanted room to allow for "effort at self improvement on the part of the labourer".⁽⁷²⁾ The old, so-called privileges he had wished to remove could come back in the form of bonuses for greater individual effort on top of the normal wage. Before, when potato ground, room for a pig or a cow, or an allotment were put forward by the farmers as a part of non-money earnings, he had objected. Now he wanted these to be given not to all labourers, but only to those who had earned them by working hardest, on top of their weekly wage. In his ideal future under unionisation, all beer drinking on the farm would cease and no beer would be provided free at harvest times. Instead, he wanted free milk to be given to the workers, although he did not seem to think this might be just as much a non-money earning as beer. Nor did he stop to consider whether milk might be a suitable drink at harvest nor how it could be kept fresh in a hot harvest field. It did not occur to him to think that beer might be a stimulant during the long harvest days at piece work. Such neglect of detail was unusual for Girdlestone and it reveals how limited his eye-witness information was, for he had seen the labourer at home, not at work. On the question of housing he was more precise. He felt it should be the "business of the Union to instruct their members"⁽⁷³⁾ to stop the labourer from living in overcrowded conditions, especially when this was caused by taking in lodgers. He felt that

inadequate housing had lowered the personal standards of the labourer:

Once let the labourer be made as fully aware as we are ourselves of all this, and he would refuse, as he ought to refuse and as the Union ought to instruct and assist him in refusing to live in the pig-styes which, as labourers' homes, are a disgrace to a civilised land.

(74)

The use of the phrase "we ourselves" reveals Girdlestone's shifting allegiance away from the labourers toward the readers of the journals. The union should also set up co-operative shops for its members which Girdlestone thought had vastly improved life for urban workers and had created:

... habits of thrift, foresight, and independence; taught them the real value of money and rescued them from debt and the public house - the one the chief weight which crushes, and the other the ordinary grave of the labourer.

(75)

Girdlestone, of course, did not recognise that his expectations were based upon an ideal labourer, nor that he saw the union as a more effective version of himself. There is no denying the pain it caused him when he was made aware that this was not the case. His disappointment began after the 1874 strike and lockout. The first intimation that he had received "hard words" ⁽⁷⁶⁾ from the head office of the National Union was given in his 1874 Mamillans' article "Lessons Learned in the Eastern Counties". These lessons applied to the National Union, as it was displaying Radicalism in the additional title to its paper The Labourers' Union Chronicle. The sub-heading was, said Girdlestone, "most visionary and ... most mischievous" for it read: "An Independent Advocate

of the British Toilers' Rights to Free Land, Freedom from Priestcraft, and From the Tyranny of Capital".⁽⁷⁷⁾ Even though Girdlestone did admit that very few rural clergymen had stood by the labourer during the early period of unionisation, or during the major strike itself, he objected to the term "priestcraft". He urged that the union should keep before its eyes the "improvement of the labourer as labourer" and not try for revolutionary change. He blamed at first the farmers and landowners for hardening the union's position. The labourers were exempt from blame:

The conduct of the labourers themselves had throughout been beyond praise ... [they] have invariably not only respected the law, but behaved with ... uniform moderation and good temper ...

(78)

But they were also the victims of false leaders:

What wonder that poor, hardworked, illiterate men should under such circumstances fall into the hands of leaders unable or unwilling to guide them rightly.

(79)

Such a stance was the only resort for those who felt that their view of the labourer was 'real' when the labourer acted in a way which was incompatible with that view. The farmers and landowners who objected to unionisation also employed it, and so in his turn, did Girdlestone, the "Friend" of the labourer, when the union altered. His allegiance was not to the union at all, but to his own image of it. To face up to the increased Radicalisation of the union would be to admit his own view was mistaken, and Girdlestone felt that this would downgrade the labourer. Unless, of course,

the labourer was a victim. His article, appropriately for this campaigner, ended on a sad note, anticipating more attacks from the newly title Chronicle and attempting a defence:

In the present instance I am prepared for an outburst of indignation from some who do not see things in the same light as I do. It would be better if people would agree to differ pleasantly and without hard words. Hard words, however, as I have above observed, have no effect on me.

(80)

and he added a plea:

Agricultural labourers are canny enough to know that a man who is thus independent, who has lived all his life amongst working men, and with no gain to himself, but rather, at much cost, has provided many hundreds of their fellow workers with better homes and higher wages, though his advice may not always be palatable, is not likely to prove a false friend.

(81)

Girdlestone's friendship for the labourers was somewhat contradictory. He advocated unionisation and yet his migration scheme worked against it. By dividing up the local community in search of the 'law of supply and demand', he took the most able and articulate away from an area obviously ripe for politicisation. By physically removing grievances, he reduced the need for a union. His own title of "false friend" must apply to any writer who on the one hand championed the cause of the labourer and on the other employed the language of the farmers when they took their cause in a direction he did not like.

Charles Kegan Paul

During 1862-72, Kegan Paul was vicar of the Dorset village of Sturminster Marshall. His memoirs show his feelings for his flock: "my heart will always warm to a Dorset peasant".⁽⁸²⁾ He was interested enough in them to collate a Dorset dialect dictionary. But he also arranged for parish pupils to attend the school that accompanied his cure, which was in the gift of Eton College. Joseph Arch visited him in his last year as a rural clergyman and together they campaigned in the area, and succeeded in raising local wages by a further two shillings a week.

These facts alone indicate that Kegan Paul might well have interesting but contradictory eye-witness statements to make about the labourer. He is particularly interesting because despite his limited writing on the subject, he displays a greater intellectual grasp than seen in SGO's and Girdlestone's writings. He was a 'literary man' and his one contribution to the debate on the labourers contained a strong anti-pastoral (rather than anti-Romantic) bias. His broader literary tastes and his recognition of the power of literary images mark his distinction from the two campaigners so far discussed. His article in Cornhill makes a significant contribution to the question of the 'plight' of the labourer:

It is even asserted that the tendency of the luxurious classes has ever been to invest the labourer with an ideal idyllic grace, so that they might unconsciously to themselves, veil the stern reality of the facts, and, justify, still

unconscious that any justification was needed, their own beautiful existence, by imagining a beauty of its own for a life which but little resembled theirs. It is said, in fact, that the life of the fields and woods, whether lived by the tiller of the soil, or the noble poacher in his outlawry Robin Hood has never been known, never understood, that the English 'peasantry' and their homes, described in drawing rooms, sketching albums, preached at from pulpits, are as mythical as that world, which Keats desired vainly to revive.

(83)

This is a clear statement linking the writings on the labourer with the leisure interest in nature. Girdlestone was unable to put this argument together, but his insistence on the clarity of his own vision is now balanced. Although guilty of his own version of an "ideal idyllic grace" for the labourers, Girdlestone obviously felt that he could not state often enough the 'truth' of the matter when all the evidence in the drawing room presented a different picture.

However, Kegan Paul was a little evasive in his attack on the "luxurious classes" in Cornhill. Apart, that is, from the fact that he chose to write in a journal which in itself promoted some of that "idyllic" picture, and was equally at home in the drawing room. The evasion lay in the fact that the above extract was preceded by the observation that there was much scepticism on the question of Robin Hood, and when Kegan Paul took that scepticism further, it was not the writer, but unknown sceptics who declared that the "aesthetic" view of nature was a conscience-saver. Kegan Paul discarded the mask when he too felt he had to authenticate his own statements:

To enable our readers to understand the situation, we propose to sketch the labourer as he is, and give a true picture of village life. It will render it more real if we admit at once that we have in our mind a definite western county and an actual agricultural district, that knowing other counties and other districts almost equally well, we believe these to be fairly typical, that we shall state facts known to ourselves, and for the accuracy of which we pledge our credit; or rather, let us say the writer of this paper - for the 'we' has an individuality - pledges his credit.

(84)

Just as the use of "we" was becoming stilted, especially when Kegan Paul found himself forced to use "ourselves", he wisely discarded the impersonal and stated his own "individuality".

In this, he and all the rural clergymen who wrote to the "quality" press on behalf of the labourer, were following the style of the field naturalist and nature Rambler, who also had to state their credentials in order to authenticate their statements. Notice too that Kegan Paul and each of the clergymen were also very clear about their knowledge, and convinced that the readers were ignorant. This was also the case in Section II where an alternative view of nature was presented; the writer felt he or she alone had the 'truth'.

Like Girdlestone, Kegan Paul was on the side of unionisation. He too shared something of the millennial feel of the movement, and the quotation which headed the article, signed *Les Paroles D'un Croyant*, made this clear:

Vous êtes comme l'enfant dans le sein
 de sa mère, attendant l'heure de sa naissance;
 comme l'insecte ailé dans le ver qui rampe,
 aspirant à sortir de cette prison terrestre
 pour prendre votre essor vers les cieux.

(85)

The powerful images underline the millennialism of the labourers' movement, and Kegan Paul's identification is again brought out a few paragraphs later: "The leaders have a definite political plan; they have an ideal future".⁽⁸⁶⁾

These ideals hold something of the Romantic, but Kegan Paul felt the Romantic poets were in part to blame for presenting an ideal too far from reality. Field labour, for instance, is contrasted adversely in the article with a poem from Thomas Hood:

There is a certain poetry of motion in the
 long lines of women who toss the hay after
 the mowers, and bind the sheaves where the
 reapers have laid low the corn, and the
 picture of Ruth when

She stood breast high amid the corn
 Clasped by the golden light of morn

is a fair one, but the beauty is like that
 of the woodland cottage she lives in, and
 will not bear too close an examination.

(87)

Kegan Paul implied that although the movements conveyed by the language "toss the hay" and "bind the sheaves" are satisfying, they are not indicative of the reality. Unlike the two campaigning writers, Kegan Paul preferred not to be too explicit as to that reality.

Keats came under attack over his poem "Robin Hood" early in the article for his nostalgia for "the merry morris din".

Kegan Paul dryly observed that Robin Hood probably never

existed. But Keats is included in the attack in the lines quoted above from Hood, for they are similar to his "She stood in tears amid the alien corn". Indeed, there are resonances of Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper" in the lines too. In fact, in choosing Hood, Kegan Paul aimed a swipe at a group of Romantic poets since Hood's lines feel memorable, without easily identifying him. They could have been written by any of the Romantic poets. Not content to rest there, after demolishing some of the reading matter in the drawing room for its false images of the labourer, Kegan Paul then went on to attack the readers of Cornhill:

To those who think it is such pleasant and picturesque employment, that the labourer's life is an idyll, only needing to be translated into words, we would recommend that they should go, not only on some fine summer's evening when the heat of the day is declining 'with Thestylis to bind the sheaves', but with Roger on a foggy November morning, to spread rotten muck over the heavy clay land, not only to 'hear the milk sing in the pail with buzzings of the honied hours', but to milk those same cows at four o'clock in winter when the frost is on the grass and a keen north wind blowing across the pastures.

(88)

It is a pity, having dismissed the use of the classic name "Thestylis", that Kegan Paul kept the 19th Century equivalent "Roger" in this paragraph. Kegan Paul is guilty too of holding an ideal image of the labourer in his mind. This image is not so idyllic as those he wished to eradicate, but it is a similar image to that held by Girdlestone:

It is in women's labour in the fields that the real evil of the cottages comes out. Delicacy has there been sapped and the woman takes her part in the coarseness of the fields. Her presence is no restraint

on language. She becomes in all but sex a man among the men. Those husbands and brothers who have the finest instincts amongst the labourers, feel it a deep degradation, even when they must submit to it, that their wives and sisters have to work in the fields.

(89)

Girdlestone did not pinpoint field work for women as being especially unchaste, but he also felt moral damage was done in the overcrowded cottage. Here Kegan Paul objected to the labourer's jokes and language when working together. He too felt that once male and female labourers got together, then they would rapidly become degraded and coursed.

It is clear these eye-witnesses felt the labourers' moral standards were not their own, and explained this behaviour away as best they could. It is noticeable that the ideal labourer is always married.

Kegan Paul enforced his sense of what is proper by the phrase "finest instincts" which he used for those labourers who objected to their female relatives working in such bad moral conditions. It was not then the physical conditions which caused Kegan Paul to avert his own and the readers' eyes from women working in the fields, for it was not the labour alone which made them different to Ruth, but the coarse jokes and sexual word play, if not physical play, to which he clearly objected. Instinct actually means a prompting by a force other than reason, but by adding "finest" to the word, Kegan Paul invested it with reason, so that the "finest instincts" of the labourers made them noble as well as natural. Instinct appeared in the early part of the

article in a similiar way where it again invested the labourer with nobility:

the strike has been conducted with with remarkable temper and an absence from violence, the more striking because it is not a studied, but an instinctive absence.

(90)

Clifford, and Arch saw good reason to predict that violence might occur should the lockout last too long, and there were one or two instances of aggression, but Kegan Paul preferred to believe that the peacefulness of the labourer was natural to him. Kegan Paul, like Girdlestone, was capable of exemplifying the ideal. He saw the best labourers as corresponding to his ideal image.

The last eye-witness did not share the ability to idealise the labourer, manifest in Girdlestone and Kegan Paul. However, like the latter, he also collected from the labourer and his articles show clearly the interest in collecting which dominated the journals' concern for the labourer in the 1880s.

Reverend Augustus Jessopp

Jessopp was a regular writer for 19th Century, contributing 62 articles between 1879 and 1894. He also wrote for Contemporary, Quarterly, and Edinburgh and the leisured pace of these particular journals, together with their accent on scholarship, is exemplified in his long and charming articles on rural life and antiquarianism. Jessopp considered himself to be in exile and to have burned his boats by retiring from teaching in Oxford to take up a rural parish. His view of

nature and his attitude toward the labourer was that of the collector:

There are countless stories which may be collected by those who know how to set about it, which go to prove this his latest anecdote but the people are a great deal too wary to open out to 'our own correspondent' if he should come down on a voyage of discovery.

(91)

However, they did "open out" to the rural clergyman on the spot, and Jessopp's essentially city interest in them, coupled with his own love of antiquarianism, seemed to have provided the right method for him to "set about" getting the labourer to talk. His eye-witness authenticating statements were all concerned with conversation:

I asked him how much he had paid the cunning man, and he reckoned it up ...
My informant assured me ...

(92)

I never heard of an employer asking after the moral character of an agricultural labourer. I've more than once heard it given as a reason why a man should be set on a job that he had just come out of goal ...
'What for do ye want me to be a exile?' ...
was said to me not so very long ago ... 'You don't seem to have any place for your cowman to live in', I said inquiringly the other day to a good old farmer of the old sort ...
'Daniel, what do you like best in all the world?'
I said to a youth of nineteen who has taken to rowdyism only because his leisure time hung heavily on his hands.

(93)

Despite actually talking to his flock, Jessopp persisted in using the term Arcady in his articles for the journals. He also included himself in his use of Arcady⁽⁹⁴⁾ for his

parishioners. It is in fact this use of the classical term, part whimsical, part self-mockery, which gives a clue to Jessopp's viewpoint. He was an outsider to the village, and wished himself elsewhere. Jessopp listened to the labourer, after a fashion, and recorded his voice well for the readers. He did not analyse it, only marketed his observations and conversations as a regular activity.

In "Supersitition in Arcady", he presented himself as a goodnatured outsider hoping to come to a better understanding with his parishioners. This article was published in 1882 and showed a very different labourer from those seen by the three foregoing eye-witnesses. The fact that there was more to record of the labourer's words was itself a change. That some of those words were surly shows the breakdown between clergy and labourers which Girdlestone lamented. "Supersitition in Arcady", published in 19th Century, opened slowly with Tennyson and moved on to an amusing presentation of the stereotype of country and city, before finally addressing itself to the narration of tales of rural imagination, spiritual beliefs and 'cunning men':

The townsman's training and associations are very hardening. He has none of the softening memories of home which we in Arcadia still cherish. His life has no real repose, no solitude, no freshness. His religious emotions are rarely appealed to ... his moral education is dangerously neglected. Of course he is shrewder and much more quick-witted than we in Arcady, but he pays dearly for what he has gained. I fear it must be allowed that the masses in the towns are, as a rule, destitute of faith in the unseen.

Jessopp was ironically using the stereotype of slow countryman, quick townsman. He assumed his readers knew that religious and moral education was difficult to impart in the country, and in the context of an article on superstition, the townsman's lack of faith in the unseen was of course not something to "fear" but a further proof of his quicker wit. Jessopp's parishioners told him of their belief in ghosts:

He thinks it would be impious to doubt that disembodied spirits still hover about the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage. Sometimes he tells you he gnaws they du, but if you press him, he looks nervous and holds his peace, trembling to tell of the untellable. Sometimes he assures you that 'there's lots on 'em has seen Old Grobey', and you are assured that Old Grobey used to walk. Of course everybody knows it's an awful thing for a dead man to walk. 'Blessee, I shouldntlike to walk, I shouldnt, same as him as used to be in the coach road'.

(96)

Jessopp was collecting from the labourer, retelling his "quaint" sayings and folk lore for this new interest in the journals in the 1880s. An anecdote followed the above extract concerning the coach road, as the lead-in indicated. Jessopp displayed a compassion for the people of his exile, and looked upon them with kindly interest. They were in his care, and cure, and they supplied him with a means to keep alert in the country, and copy for the journals. His goodwill was slightly tinged with wonder:

You find him meekly huddling under the shelter of a bank or bush, and doing nothing, nothing, nothing. The hours roll on, and the light gets less and less, and at last he shambles homewards. What has he been thinking about all the time?....

(97)

Jessopp did not stop to work out a practical reason for the labourer's wait under the hedge. For instance, he might not be paid if he left the scene of his work while it was still light, in case the weather improved, even if it was too wet to work during the moment when Jessopp saw him. Instead of considering a practical solution, Jessopp preferred to look at him as if he were a man who had chosen to act as he had. He asked much the same rhetorical question, and with the same fascination, of the lives of the dead inhabitants of the village whom he researched through parish records.

Jessopp's article moved from ghosts to chapel meetings and personal revelations of the Lord, all in the same light tone. He advised other clergy that it was well to attend chapel and not be shut off as a Church of England priest.

We may hear broad hints directed against ourselves - find our sense of the fitness of things shocked by bitter words and insinuations, cruel and undeserved: we may be outraged by indelicacy and utterances bordering on the profane; sometimes too we shall be brought into very awkward positions, from which it will be hard to escape with dignity or even without humiliation; but all this is not the rule. As a rule, we shall be welcome, and heartily welcome; and if we can stoop to learn of others, we shall find that there are those outside the pale of the Church who have something to teach us.

(98)

However, the only teachings Jessopp passed on in his article were anecdotes which showed the labourer to be naive and amusing. Such anecdotes as the "Meetinger"⁽⁹⁹⁾ telling his assembly not to lean on angels as they had to look after themselves. Collecting from the labourer made them into 'characters' and not people, and Jessopp's view of the labourer was in keeping with his use of them as a collector. They were a repository of lore and marketable anecdote.

Jessop's ability to make the labourer tell him stories is far greater than that of the three preceeding writers. In an anecdote concerning an old labourer fooling a newspaper man, in his presence illustrates this, as his conversation with the old man afterwards reveals:

'Never see such a gentleman', said Huggins to me next day, with a cunning twinkle of his eye. 'He talkt that hard as the handle o' the door's been loose ever since! But Lor! who was a going to understand him; twarnt likely!' 'Made you deaf Huggins, didn't he? [Jessopp had observed Huggins affect deafness] 'Oh! Ah!' said Huggins, and I think I saw his sides shaking.

(99)

The article contained no morally or religiously based censure of superstitions, even though some of the stories told of harsh behaviour. Jessopp concluded his lengthy article with an address to the reader: "Has the reader had enough of these stories? Then, because enough is as good as a feast, he shall have no more! But I could...."(100)

The foregoing shows Jessopp's collecting interest far more than his interest in the labourer's physical well-being, but he too could address himself to the old problem of cottages. In "Clouds Over Arcady", Jessopp's subject was rural decline. He also sprinkled the article with examples of rural disrespect:

Indeed, it is not always prudent to suggest the advisability of going abroad. In Arcady people are often very indignant indeed at being advised to emigrate.... "I ain't a going to work like a slave out there. They none on 'em comes back. They writes home a time or two, and then we never hear no more about 'em....

(101)

7:44

He stared at me vacantly, sniggered, hesitated, then he answered frankly.... He spate upon the ground as Arcadians are wont to do in a difficulty.... (102)

'I hope you go to chapel, John', said I to a shaggy sot one day. 'What for should I go to chapel?' he asked with some fierceness. 'Why? Because you never come to church; and I'd ten times rather see you go to chapel than nowhere, man.' 'Ah'. Would you? But I wouldn't, and that's jest where it is.... ' (103)

'Thet du hull-ly pet me aywt, thet du!' said a scowling hedger to a friend of mine a year or two ago. He was following with his fiery eye the carriage of Lady S -, who with a friend had just driven by. 'What puts you out, David?' said the other. 'What? Whoi, hayw thet should tyake tew men and tew harses to cyart they two women abaywt.' (104)

Jessopp did not seem to feel that his description of the labourer as a "shaggy sot" might manifest itself to him, and so cause some of the "fierceness" of the reply. Instead, he concluded from these illustrations that the village contained only the dregs of the labourers, and that the best ones had gone to the city. The labourers quoted above sound bitter and class-conscious. To Jessopp this made them ne'er-do-wells. He could better understand a wish to leave the village, as he saw it as natural that there was no inducement for the labourer (and himself) to stay. He felt that the "swains of Arcady have a hankering to see the big world and to move among the masses" but he did allow Widow Rossin to give another reason for leaving:

Taint as if my son John lays by, as you may say; he's just as hard work to make two ends meet as Sam has here at home. But you see Sam'll never be no better, and John'll never be no wuss. (105)

Sam was a labourer and John was a policeman. Not only was there no 'career' as such in labouring, but there was no distinction or merit in it, argued Jessopp, echoing Girdlestone. "Character goes for nothing in Arcady" he stated, commenting on the fact that the farmer did not ask for references. However, Jessopp could work up some indignation on behalf of the labourers when it came to the old chestnut of cottages. Under this influence his urbanity dropped away:

But look at the - what must I call them? - the
places where these young fellows are born and
take their meals in and sleep in - houses?
Faugh! Houses?

(106)

It is not surprising to find the village stagnant in the 1880s because of recurrent agricultural depressions, but the quotations from the labourer sound bitter rather than dejected at his lack of decent housing. If it was not for this bitterness they might sound bogus.

Jessopp's articles, despite showing the labourer talking, showed his inability to listen closely. Their bitterness was not observed, only their surliness. And this he accounted for, not because he saw an ideal labourer, but because not seeing any ideal qualities in them at all, not even at an instinctive level, he assumed they had all left the village.

.....oOo.....

The significance of the writings of these four eye-witnesses are manifold. They demonstrate the far-reaching effect of the leisure interests in nature which excluded the labourer from view. Here they reappear in a charitable interest. The aesthetic taste which demanded harmony in the landscape and the picturesque is seen in SGO's response to landowners and the kind of cottages they built. His scientific interests show themselves in his distance from his flock, as well as in his language. For all his long-established career as a campaigner, it is clear that the labourers' sanitary habits fascinated him much as he would be fascinated by an interesting new plant distorted by an unfavourable environment. Both Girdlestone and Kegan Paul based their ideal of the labourer upon a Platonic form, although clearly, Joseph Arch himself appeared to them both to be a living model for this image. Kegan Paul recognised the power of the aesthetic view of nature, and because of this recognition, the roots of his idealisation are seen. So attractive and so far-reaching were the myths of Robin Hood and Ruth clinging round the labourer when viewed by the "luxurious classes" that only an equally noble and exalted image could oppose them. Hence, both Kegan Paul and Girdlestone's insistence on their version of the 'truth' about the labourer and their careful, even scientific, attention to facts and authenticating information. In contrast Jessopp's urbane and charming style illustrates well the kind of eye-witness information from the country which the journals in the 1880s would place again and again.

All four were presented in the journals and newspapers as eye-witnesses; as well-informed, observant men on the spot. Theirs

was the kind of information which could form part of a Blue Book and help to shape legislation. They wrote to the quality press to inform, to harangue, to redress false images, and in one case to entertain. Something of the men and women they wrote about might perhaps be seen and heard behind these individual motivated responses. They claimed they were giving facts, and they felt their facts were needed by the readers of the journals. They did not claim, like Jefferies "This is no fiction"⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ and only one of this distinguished company of sincere men adopted an outright fictional tone. Their writings and their images of the labourer take the "plight of the labourer" out of the world of reports and "our own correspondent" into the problematic world of fact and fiction, truth and reality. The problem of their writing leads into the 19th century's greatest literary contribution: Realism.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Seven

- (1) Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne (1808-1889) was given the living of Durweston in Dorset by Lord Portman in 1841. He lived there until 1875 and it was this area of the country which supplied him with his "knowledge" of the labourer.
- (2) Edward Girdlestone (1805-1884) gained his "knowledge" of the labourers from his work as Vicar of Halberton, Devonshire from 1862 to 1872 when he worked at Olveston, near Almondsbury.
- (3) This could well have been the case, since the agricultural depressions first reduced the labour force, and second reduced spending on other than first priorities. Cottages, as these writers show, were not given a high priority. Only landowners with ample means and a philanthropic attitude would build new cottages for all the farm staff during the latter half of the 19th century.
- (4) c.f. Cook, C. A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900-1976 London 1976 Chapter 1 "The Liberal Tradition" p. 15
- (5) Jennings Davis, Rev. G. "The Peasantry of the South of England" Fraser's May 1873 p. 542. Subsequent parts appeared in Jun. 1873 pp. 57-73 and Jul. 1873 pp. 679-692. It was also reprinted as a pamphlet with a Preface by Lord Shaftesbury as The Agricultural Labourer 1873
- (6) c.f. Inglis, K.S. Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England London 1963 Chapter 7 "The Churches and Social Reforms" pps. 285 & 302 in particular.
- (7) The Royal Commission published its findings in 1874.
- (8) Parliamentary Papers: 1867 Report on the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1868-9 XIII
- (9) SGO helped him in 1843 to secure a curacy through Lord Portman. The following year he married into the family.
- (10) Froude met his future wife, the third of the sisters to marry an influential writer, through his friendship with Kingsley. SGO shows little Radicalism when compared with his two brothers-in-law.
- (11) The claim for friendship is made by SGO's editor, but Chadwick's influence is clear even if there was no further, more personal link between them. SGO and Chadwick shared an interest in botany and a passion for sanitary reform and the details of 'fever dens'.
- (12) White, A. ed The Letters of SGO: A Series of Letters on Public Affairs, Published in The Times 1844-1888 London 1890 p. Vol. I p. xii

- (13) ibid. p. xxi (Vol. I)
- (14) as for example, SGO's Letters on the Education of Young Children Edinburgh 1865, The Respective Duties of Landlords, Tenants and Labourers London 1861 taken from an address delivered to a Farmers' Club and Letter to the Marquis of Salisbury on a late article /written by the latter/ in the National Review respecting Labourers and Artisans Dwellings with Extracts from Letters to The Times and Other Contributions to the Press by "SGO" Lewes 1883. The only other contribution to the press, apart from The Times which I could find was an article for Temple Bar "Stray Thoughts on the Coming Policital and Social Upheaval" Jan. 1872 pp. 240-251
- (15) White, op.cit. p. xi
- (16) The Times Sep. 12 1863 p. 10
- (17) The Times Aug. 29 1865 p. 4
- (18) ibid. p. 4
- (19) The Times Sep. 21 1865 p. 4
- (20) Some clergymen lived in scattered villages and large rural parishes where it was necessary to ride in order to visit their parishioners, but keeping a horse was costly and required a reasonable income. Girdlestone also rode round his parish.
- (21) The Times Dec. 26 1860 p. 8
- (22) The Times Oct. 10 1864 p. 7
- (23) The Times Oct. 7 1876 p. 11
- (24) The Times Sep. 5 1872 p.11
- (25) The Times Apr. 20 1867 p. 11
- (26) The Times Sep. 18 1888 p. 11
- (27) The Times Sep. 12 1863 p. 10
- (28) ibid. p. 10
- (29) ibid. p. 10 I am not sure whom SGO means by James, perhaps the coachman?
- (30) ibid. p. 10 "Dick Partridge" is described as "six-foot-two civil" which could make him a footman, but the name implies a gamekeeper.

- (31) The Times Sep. 18 1863 p. 8
- (32) ibid. p. 8
- (33) The Times Oct 10 1864 p. 7 op.cit.
- (34) The Times, Sep. 18 1863, p. 8., op.cit.
- (35) The Times Sep. 5 1872 p. 11
- (36) ibid. p. 11
- (37) The Times Apr. 8 1872 p. 6
- (38) The Times, Sep. 5 1872 p. 11, op.cit.
- (39) ibid. p. 11
- (40) The Times, Dec. 28 1860 p. 8, op.cit.
- (41) The Times, Sep. 18 1863 p. 8, op.cit.
- (42) The Times May 15 1865 p. 7
- (43) White, op.cit. p. 58
- (44) The Times Apr. 26 1861 p. 10
- (45) ibid. p. 10
- (46) ibid. p. 10
- (47) ibid. p. 10
- (48) ibid. p. 10
- (49) ibid. p. 10
- (50) ibid. p. 10
- (51) The Times Oct. 25 1866 p. 8
- (52) c.f. Girdlestone's letters to The Times Oct. 12 p. 6 and Oct. 28 1869 p. 4 where he attempted to clear himself from the criticisms of Mr Walker MP who accused him of speaking on behalf of agricultural labourers for all England.. (It often took Girdlestone two letters to state his case). On Sep. 4 1869 p. 8 an anonymous landowner complained that Girdlestone had unjustly accused the landowners of not doing their duty by rural schools. Charles A.W. Troyte (a model landlord) felt obliged to write and object on Apr. 12 1867 p. 5 because he felt the picture was not as black as Girdlestone was then painting it, and so on.

- (53) Girdlestone, E. The Times Apr. 1 1867 p. 6
- (54) c.f. Leader art. The Times Apr. 2 1867 p. 9
- (55) Girdlestone, E. "Landowners, Land and Those Who Till It" Frasers Dec. 1868 p. 728
- (56) ibid. fn. 1 p. 729
- (57) ibid. p. 730
- (58) ibid. p. 731, p. 734. fn. 1 p. 737
- (59) Girdlestone, E. "The National Agricultural Labourers' Union" Macmillans Sep. 1873 p. 742
- (60) Girdlestone, Frasers, p. 740, op.cit.
- (61) Girdlestone, E. "The Agricultural Labourer" Macmillans Jul, 1872 p. 262
- (62) Girdlestone, Macmillans, 1873, pp. 638-9 op.cit.
- (63) Girdlestone, Frasers, p. 734 op.cit.
- (64) ibid. p. 738
- (65) ibid. p. 738
- (66) ibid. p. 733
- (67) ibid. p. 739
- (68) ibid. p. 739
- (69) Girdlestone, Macmillans, 1873 p. 443 op.cit.
- (70) ibid. p. 443
- (71) Girdlestone, Macmillans, 1872 p. 262 op.cit.
- (72) Girdlestone, Macmillans, 1873 pp. 440-1 op.cit.
- (73) ibid. p. 441
- (74) ibid. p. 441
- (75) ibid. p. 442
- (76) Girdlestone, E. "Lessons Learned in the Eastern Counties" Macmillans Dec. 1874 p. 168
- (77) ibid. p. 162
- (78) ibid. p. 162
- (79) ibid. p. 164

- (80) ibid. p. 168
- (81) ibid. p. 168
- (82) Kegan Paul, C. Memories London 1899 p. 245
- (83) Kegan Paul, C. "The Agricultural Labourer" Cornhill Jan. 1874 p. 686
- (84) ibid. pp. 687-8
- (85) ibid. p. 686
- (86) ibid. p. 687
- (87) ibid. pp. 691-2
- (88) ibid. p. 693
- (89) ibid. p. 691
- (90) ibid. p. 687
- (91) Jessop, Rev. A. "Superstition in Arcady" 19th Century Nov. 1882 p. 743. For further information concerning Jessopp's exile, see the entry for him in DNB.
- (92) ibid. p. 745 and p. 749
- (93) Jessop, Rev. A. "Clouds Over Arcady" 19th Century Oct. 1883 p. 594, p. 595, p. 597 and p. 599
- (94) Jessop, 19th Century 1882 p. 735, op.cit.
- (95) ibid. p. 735
- (96) ibid. p. 737
- (97) ibid. p. 739
- (98) ibid. p. 740
- (99) ibid. p. 744
- (100) ibid. p. 754
- (101) Jessop, 19th Century 1883 p. 595, op.cit.
- (102) ibid. p. 599
- (103) ibid. pp. 600-1
- (104) ibid. p. 601
- (105) ibid. p. 593
- (106) ibid. p. 596
- (107) Jefferies, R. "John Smith's Shanty" Fraser's Feb. 1874 p. 144

From Fact to Fiction

The following Chapter introduces, for the first time in this study, an examination of literary texts. So far the vast majority of the material under scrutiny has come from newspaper and journal articles, with reference to letters, cartoons and paintings of the period. However, it is precisely at this point - following the evidence of eye witnesses - that fictional writings need to be explored in order to pursue the thesis. This does not mean however a laying aside of the contextual method of examination. Despite the introduction of established literary texts: Hardy's Far From the Madding Crowd and Eliot's Adam Bede, the methodology does not 'lapse' into literary criticism. The focus of attention in Chapter Eight is on the popularity of these two works and they are discussed within the context of their appreciation by the writers of review articles for the "quality" journals. These texts are not present in order to see whether a novelist could present a 'true' labourer, or a 'truer' labourer than an eye-witness, for this study is not concerned with such a search. Nor is the relation of these novels to their author's other works relevant here, or an evaluation of the literary qualities, good or bad, or authorial stance, towards the labourers of importance within the context of this study. Only the novels' reception, and the journals' verdict upon the image of labourers presented within the novels is examined here.

It is crucial in an understanding of the way in which nature and the agricultural labourer were seen by the small but

powerful minority concerned with "quality" journalism that the literary texts chosen should fit the following exacting criteria. First, the novels should be rural based and assumed by readers and critics to be dealing with nature and the agricultural labourer. Second, they should be popular, in the economic sense of selling well, but also in the sense that they were used as references and became part of drawing room conversation and fashionable leisure interests of the time. Third, they should be well reviewed in the "quality" press over a considerable length of time, sufficient to encompass important changes within the journals themselves and the life span of the Agricultural Unions. This last criterion restricts the publication dates of the novels to two precise periods, which are: pre union (1859-1867) and the active Union period (1872-1875).

It can readily be seen that given these criteria, the choice of novels was limited. Silas Marner (1861) was given some consideration instead of Adam Bede but this was soon abandoned. Not only was Eliot hugely successful with Adam Bede but its date and its subject matter made the novel peculiarly fitted to this study. In Chapter Three, it will be remembered, a painting showing a court scene where rural figures were held in suspense Waiting For the Verdict (Solomon 1857) was contrasted in its treatment by critics with Girls Dancing (Mason 1869) in particular when they were recalling this latter work in the 1870s on the death of the artist. There is a striking parallel, as will be seen, between the reception of rural figures in these two paintings by the critics and the the reception of Hardy's and Eliot's labourers in 1859 and 1874. Similarly, although Hardy's Tess (1891) and Mayor

(1886) were obvious choices, neither were serialised in a journal, nor as well received as Madding Crowd (1874). Both the Mayor and Tess contain detailed presentations of rural working life, and have agricultural labourers as their central characters, but as has already been set out, these considerations could not be of major importance when selecting the literary texts which would best carry forward the present stream of enquiry. Madding Crowd was the most popular of Hardy's novels, it was initially considered to be written by Eliot, and the critics' hostile reaction to the labourers depicted within it, all these made the novel essential for the study. Whether Hardy meant his novel to be accepted (or criticised) on the ground to be revealed in the following chapter, is not of relevance here, nor are present day analyses of his treatment of the labourer within that novel. It is a purely contextual study of these two novels which follows, in keeping with the rest of this work.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Fiction

Fictional Labourers

The writers in the quality journals, with few exceptions, presented a fictional labourer to their readers. It was, as in reviews of Mason's Girls Dancing or Lady Stradbroke's view of her cottagers, the image which the writers, and their presumed readers, wanted to believe: "rosy", happy, idealised. Quite another kind of fiction existed in the morally ideal labourers seen by Kegan Paul and Girdlestone. Yet all these writers were aware that there was a different kind of labourer to be seen from the one they preferred. They accounted for the difference in various ways. Lady Stradbroke felt that the difference must lie in evil influences, which she felt emanated from the industrial north, brought to the labourers in the name of unionisation. Kegan Paul and Girdlestone, on the contrary, felt that the evil influences came from the demoralisation of the labourers. The question of whether labourers were poachers or not, and if they were, which sort of labourer poached - more superior, less countrified? - were also questions which were evoked by a sense that there were different labourers to be seen, while each writer claimed his version as the 'true' labourer.

Another form of fiction is found in the formula of the articles themselves, and in the general trend towards lighter, more anecdotal pieces of writing in the journals in the late 19th century. The form of the nature ramble and the field naturalist are particularly apposite. The articles by Denham Jordan and Jean Visger for instance, were fictionalised accounts of

naturalists and of labourers they met in the field. An increasing number of contributions purporting to be written by labourers, ranging from SGO's seven Dorsetshire labourers' letter to Watson's Confessions of a Poacher, could not be other than fictional accounts. In some cases these were presented as short stories,⁽¹⁾ but for the most part they were presented as fact or first-hand accounts. Despite all this material which could be readily drawn upon, few novels featured rural settings⁽²⁾ or took labourers as major characters. Only two sold well and were extensively reviewed in the journals. These were George Eliot's Adam Bede and Thomas Hardy's Far From the Madding Crowd.

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the reviews of these two rural novels which caught the affections of the journal reading public. From this material it is possible to assess the response to a 'genuine' fictional labourer. It is not intended to analyse closely Eliot's and Hardy's own presentations of the labourer, but to concentrate on the critical acclaim or condemnation which they received in the journals. It is the way in which the fictional labourers in these novels were discussed which is of prime importance more than the treatment of the labourers in the novels themselves. Thus not the texts themselves but secondary material is the object of scrutiny.

The Charm of Adam Bede

Jane Welsh Carlyle's private letter to Eliot sets out very clearly the line taken by the collective critical response. The reviews were not as effusive, but the same sense of an evocation of country life affected all who read Adam Bede:

Oh yes! It was as good as going into the country for one's health, the reading of that Book was! - like a visit to Scotland minus the fatigues of the long journey, and the grief of seeing friends grown old, and Places that knew me knowing me no more! I could fancy in reading it, to be seeing and hearing once again a crystal-clear, musical, Scotch stream, such as I long to lie down beside and - cry at (!) for gladness and sadness; after a long stifling sojourn in the South where there is no water but what is stagnant or muddy!

(3)

Like the critics' responses to landscape paintings, she rejoiced in Adam Bede because it took her from the city into nature. There is no idea in her letter of any difference between reading Adam Bede and experiencing the countryside of Scotland; apart from the fatigue of the journey.

Journalists and reviewers appeared to feel the same, and praised the novel for its 'truth' to nature. An anonymous review in Saturday dwelt on the versimilitude in the book:

He gives us something we have not had before. He is evidently a country clergyman, and the object of his observation has been the rustic life of a village in one of the central counties - a very unpromising object of observing to most men, but most men are not observers..... We have, for instance, a description of an adult nightschool, the only object of which is to introduce sketches of three of the scholars. They were rustics whom the author had studied, and these studies are brought in to fill up a corner of a larger picture. In these sketches, slight as they are, there is great merit..... The Hall Farm is like a farm with a real dairy to be kept clean, and real maids to be scolded, not a mere theatrical farm, intended to display the powers of the first and second rustic clown....

(4)

Of course, before authorship was revealed, reviewers had no evidence about Eliot, apart from Scenes from Clerical Life to suggest where she made her "studies" (rather than knowledge) other than the subject matter of her books.

There were plausible reasons for assuming she was a rural clergyman. Leaving aside the eye-witness role of rural clergymen, utilised by Royal Commissions, and the presence of campaigning clergymen like SGO, it was well known that the clergyman was one of the few educated inhabitants of the village. The extract refers to the nightschool, most often run by the clergyman, and the novel itself shows the author's interest in religion.

Yet although the details were admired, Saturday's reviewer condemned the plot:

The story, as a story, breaks down. Probably the author found it difficult to hit on any very dramatic and stirring incident in rustic life to make the turning point of his novel; but whatever his difficulties may have been, his choice has been very unfortunate.

(5)

It is a stereotype to think that nothing very "stirring" happened in "rustic life". The prevailing image of peace and unchanging order in the country caused the reviewer to object to the plot, not because it was so out of keeping with the context of the novel's Realism, but for setting melodrama in the quiet and uneventful country. It was:

.... out of keeping with the calm simplicity of rural life. Of course, everyone knows that every sin under heaven is committed freely in agricultural villages, and if any one chooses to insist that pretty dairymaids are in danger of being seduced, he at least keeps within the bounds of fact. But that is no reason why a picture of village character and village humour should be made so painful as it is by the introduction into the foreground of the startling horrors of rustic reality. We do not expect that we are to pass from the discreet love of a well to do carpenter to child murder and executions....

(6)

This review was written in 1859, just before the boom in journals where leisure interests in nature were reported assiduously. It was also before the presentation of the labourer as a topic of concern. Despite being written before this upsurge the writer still felt, as later journalists also felt, that "everybody knows that every sin under heaven is committed freely in agricultural villages". However, despite

this statement, the only sin that was felt to be "within the bounds of fact" was the "sin" of seduction. Even though the plot was "startling" to the writer, the term "rustic reality" was still employed. Of course a vein of irony runs through the above extract and there is a certain amount of dramatic overstatement in the writing, but nevertheless the writer had felt a shock to pass from a comfortable world of "village character and village humour" to the larger tragic scenes of the novel. The reviewer was not claiming that the plot was incredible, only that it was unexpected in a rural novel.

Here we see clearly that two kinds of "reality" of village life existed. One did contain and could contain "every sin under heaven" some of which Eliot portrayed. Another was a more comfortable view of peaceful village life. The reviewer objected to the sharp jump from one to the other which Eliot's plot demanded.

Lucas Collins opened his review of Adam Bede on a note of unpleasant surprise, but this was mainly because he felt a Methodist preacher was not suitable as a heroine. He explained the enthusiasm for Eliot's novel by suggesting that the working classes enjoyed novels set in worlds remote from their own. He thus led the reader to the following conclusion concerning Adam Bede:

But however highly coloured, these scenes have for their readers, the same sort of charm which the Arabian Nights and the Tales of the Genii have for children - and in how many respects do the rough working classes resemble children! - They open to the imagination the secrets of a world beyond themselves. It is probably due to a similar feeling among the higher classes that some modern writers have successfully appealed, when they have chosen for their subject the romance of humble life....

(7)

Collins' analogy makes clear his belief that working class rural life was so remote that it was like life in a foreign country, or a different time. He was however as delighted as everyone else in his own class to be admitted to the humble life of the "children" in Adam Bede. He especially liked the character of Mrs Poyser and was the first in the long line of her admirers. Indeed, as Adam Bede was not a serialised novel, his review contained the first quotations from Mrs Poyser to appear in a journal. From then on the reviewers declared that it was fashionable to quote her, a fashion which culminated in her proverbial expressions being quoted in Parliament. When a contemporary biographer revealed that Prince Albert quoted her too, she gained the highest accolade of Victorian popularity.⁽⁸⁾ Collins felt she was a character so well drawn from life, and so unshaped by art, as to be a photograph:

She comes out with a fund of droll remarks in the most unexpected places, and possesses a vein of grotesque poetry, which embraces all objects from the highest to the most familiar. Yet she is as natural as a photograph. We fear indeed, there may be no actual farmer's wife possessing all Mrs Poyser's wit....

(9)

For all this unposed naturalism, and his simile, he did feel that the sustained quality of Mrs Poyser's wit must make her character an amalgam rather than a 'real' woman. Apart from introducing Mrs Poyser, Collins' review also brought forward the labourers as a successful element in the novel. They were the "genuine article"⁽¹⁰⁾ and this was proved to him by Dinah's lack of lasting converts in the village. The paganism of the country was as true today as twenty years ago (the time of the novel) he felt. The fictional villager's lack of faith convinced Collins that Eliot had made "no attempt to paint rural life as an Arcadia of innocence"⁽¹¹⁾ in the novel.

The Times review endorsed admiration of the novel because of its country characteristics. E.S. Dallas declared that the charm of Adam Bede lay in its "ruralness":

There is not much of a story it will be seen. The great charm of the novel is rather in the characters introduced than in the action which they carry on. All the characters are so true and so natural, and so racy that we love to hear them talk for the sake of talking. They are so full of strange humours and funny pretty sayings that we entirely overlook the want of movement in the story.

(12)

It was "the gem of the novel ... Mrs Poyser" who made up for the lack of movement.

.....000.....

As can be seen in these extracts from contemporary reviews, the literary criticism of the journals was principally con-

cerned with truth, not art. So far, Adam Bede has been described as a novel where the plot is decidedly out of context with the rural setting and the pace is too slow. The heroine draws too much attention to her calling by its rarity and the farmer's wife is not a complete character but a type. Despite all these weaknesses, which were commented upon, the charm of Adam Bede worked because it contained, they felt, the truth of rural life.

After the foregoing reviews it is something of a relief to read Charles Dickens' letter to Eliot. He acknowledged that she had caught an aspect of rural life well but made it clear that he, unlike the reviewers, recognised that her novel was a work of fiction:

The whole country life that the story is set in, is so real, and so droll and genuine, and yet so selected and polished by art, that I cannot praise it enough to you.

(13)

The awareness that there had been selection and polishing by the author was not present in the reviews. Of course the reviewers knew they were commenting upon a novel, but they were not interested in the techniques of writing novels, or the Realism presented to them in Adam Bede. Only Dickens saw that Eliot's art had made her novel 'real' and 'genuine' to the reader. The reviewers did not speculate on verisimilitude as a technique but simply accepted the detail as truth faithfully observed and presented in a novel. They were too charmed to consider that they were reading a work of fiction.

.....000.....

Critical acclaim came from all the popular journals of the day. Ann Mozley enthusiastically reviewed the novel for Bentley's Quarterly Review (Bentleys) and speculated upon its truth:

There are country scenes in Adam Bede looked back upon with an almost passionate tenderness, as though the senses ached for the genial old home.

What connection the writer may have had with country life we do not know. A close participation in its cares and business is not compatible with the indications of a thorough education; but some sort of constant familiar intercourse with its details is evident, and forces us into speculations ... Somehow we never find ourselves attributing invention to this writer, whether it is true or not, we believe that it is all real ... that what is so vividly reported is taken from life.

(14)

The first part of the extract encapsulates the spell of the novel. The second paragraph shows Mozley's deductions from it. "A thorough education" lifted the author above actually living the rural life direct, but in order to create the Realism, it was felt that she must have had a "close connection" with it, and the implication is that it was a superior kind of connection. Mozley did not use the term Realism of course, but her phrase "whether it is true or not" implying reality had been created, approached an awareness of Realism.

It is however, the opening lines of this extract which are most revealing. Only those who felt they were cut off from rural life in the city would yearn with "passionate tenderness" for the "genial old home". Nostalgia had been evoked by Adam Bede so powerfully that it could not be attributed to invention. So much did Mozley feel that Adam Bede was

factual, she recommended it to readers who were "indifferent to all previous fiction". They would "welcome it as the voice of their own experience in a sense no other book has ever been". She did not know "whether our literature anywhere possesses such a closely true picture of rural life as Adam Bede". (15)

The charm for her, as for other critics, lay in Eliot's evocation of a familiar rural existence. This was so well known that none of the critics felt they needed to clearly identify just what aspect of rural life they knew and how it tallied with the fictional picture. Adam Bede went not only to their hearts, but straight to a kind of folk memory of a 'golden age'.

Attempts to Break the Charm

The following year, when Eliot's identity was known, R.H. Hutton claimed she was a genius. This review was presented in National in the days when it was a religious journal and not a champion of the Conservative and Unionist Party. Hutton felt she

delighted in depicting the life of a little community; and even when she had got a really deep interest at work on her village stage, she was always anxious to remind herself and her readers how the general population were doing meanwhile in spite of it, - to picture them as they were, quite unconscious of the unfolding plot and living out their ordinary lives in the ordinary way, with but few half-curious glances at the slowly maturing crisis.

Hutton did not claim that the rural world she created was true. Nor did he recognise that the kind of writing he described was a technique which added to the understanding of the characters and of the "slowly maturing crisis". He also had little time for a fashionable interest in labourers and felt that Eliot's presentation of them was as distant and as patronising as he felt was proper:

Some of George Eliot's most subtle and characteristic humour consists in giving to the conversation of her rural louts a distinct, though of course unconscious, bearing on the intellectual questions contemporaneously discussed by the most highly cultivated, without coming to any more impressive results. Even when this is not the case, there is a humour in the mere sharpness of the contrast between the favourite subject of her boors and those of refined society.

(17)

This is a harsh comment, and the use of the terms "louts" and "boors" for labourers displays the "aesthetic" view of them when they appear in "refined" art. To Hutton they were only good for a joke, and the point of that joke lay in the fact that the novel itself was above their heads. In this sense he confirmed the view that the working classes were children. He felt they existed in Eliot's novel on a lower level, not quite up to the adult standards held by the author.

Hutton's article not only recognised Eliot as a genius but also showed a recognition that Adam Bede was a work of fiction. His interest lay in her work and her abilities and he did not luxuriate in the evocations of country life in the novel.

Adam Bede was remembered in reviews of Eliot's succeeding novels, usually more favourably, but attempts were made to see past its first warm reception. In 1866 an anonymous review in Saturday complained of the early reception of Adam Bede: "People talk ... of Adam Bede as if it contained no more than a photographic reproduction of the life of Midlands dairies and farm houses and apple-orchards".⁽¹⁸⁾ There were other qualities in the novel to admire. The writer preferred the plot in comparison to that of Felix Holt for instance.

Henry James, on re-reading the novel, felt that Mrs Poyser had lost her charms:

When you re-read coldly and critically a book which in former years you have read warmly and carelessly, you are surprised to see how it changes its proportions. It falls away in those parts which have been pre-eminent in your memory, and it increases in the small portions. Until I lately read Adam Bede for a second time, Mrs Poyser was in my mind its representative figure; for I remembered a number of her epigrammatic sallies. But now, after a second reading, Mrs Poyser is the last figure I think of, and a fresh perusal of her witticisms has considerably diminished their classical flavour.

(19)

Apart from these writers in the 1860s, no other journalists and reviewers seemed to have picked up their copies for a second time in any other mood than the "warm and careless" one which James so happily described.

These three reviewers hardly expected to halt sales, rather

their criticism demonstrates that the book was an established favourite. Adam Bede was a considerable commercial success. It sold 3,000 copies in the first three months following publication. Before the end of its first year it went through eight printings and a total of almost 16,000 copies were sold. It was the novel of its year, as great a success as Tennyson's Idylls of the King.⁽²⁰⁾

Several important revelations come from this bibliographical review of the impact of Adam Bede. The most significant is the readiness of writers to invest the rural placement of the novel with an actuality they not only recognised but also lacked. The novel assured them that the countryside was timeless, and its inhabitants quaint.

The Labourer Evoked

The fact is the novel contained few agricultural labourers. Eliot did not pay special attention to them. They appeared in every crowd scene, for example when Dinah preached on the village green, and they also took their part in the harvest celebrations provided by the Squire. One scene already referred to showed grown labourers laboriously learning to read, and that is the extent of their presence in Adam Bede. The novel is set around two artisans (the carpenter Bedes) a tenant farmer and his wife (Mr & Mrs Poyser), a factory worker (Dinah) and a dairymaid (Hetty). The Squire, the Squire's son and the Rector and his sister and

mother are the remaining principal characters.

The famous Dutch painting aside in Adam Bede has often been quoted to show Eliot's interest in 'low life subjects!'. However, there is little evidence in the novel to support the view that she took a close interest in labour. Her presentation of haymaking shows her averting the reader's eyes from a study of their work:

The jocose talk of haymakers is best at a distance; like those clumsy bells round the cows necks, it has rather a coarse sound when it comes too close, and may even grate on your ears painfully; but heard from far off, it mingles very prettily with other joyous sounds of nature.

(21)

She dwelt so fondly on the paintings of the Dutch school because she found beauty in their careful study of interiors and the marks of work upon the inhabitants of those interiors. It is not a school noted for its representation of people working in the open air. This interest, presented as an aside, was a central part of Adam Bede, for home, and the effect of work, connected all the characters in the novel. They were shown to be affected by these forces which held the village community together. In order to display the moral values of her characters Eliot showed their feelings and relations to both home and work. All her 'good' characters liked the feeling of a job well done, including the young and irresponsible son of the Squire. Only Hetty took no pleasure in work or home, and she carried the burden of the 'evil' actions in the novel. All the 'good' characters were strongly connected to their homes.

It cost Dinah a struggle to leave Snowfield, and the Poysers' greatest pain in the novel was caused by the necessity of leaving their home. Hetty however was referred to by Eliot as a shallowly rooted person, able to exist anywhere. As the novel is set in a rural environment, it was an easy matter for readers of Adam Bede to identify the moral values of stability, (love of home, love of work etc.) with the country. Inherent in the love of home was also care for the community. Perhaps the most damning presentation of Hetty in the novel is the famous scene where she looked at herself in the mirror while Dinah looked out at the familiar landscape surrounding the farm and the village.

There is a strong sense in the novel that the connection of the characters to their homes, which as it is a rural novel also means to the land, made them 'genuine'. Therefore Arthur's sorrow at his self-imposed exile showed that he had chosen a punishment for himself which would adequately expiate his guilt. No reviewer suggested he had escaped punishment while Hetty took the brunt of it. The plot itself, especially the execution and the stay of execution scenes were criticised, but no one criticised Eliot for dealing out her punishments to these lovers unfairly. Contemporary readers presumably recognised the pain of Arthur's exile and accepted that he was worthy of redemption, just as was meant by the author. For the Poysers, the consequence of Hetty's actions was to make them come to the painful resolve to leave their home. The extent of suffering by both Arthur and the Poysers was meant to be felt in the novel sufficiently to balance Hetty's deeds, and this was understood

by the Victorians far more than it is today. It confirmed the pre-existing feeling that security on the land and rootedness in the country community were of major importance. When characters showed the pain of moving they showed the loss of country life which was readily identified with by readers.

It was these moral values and the confirmations they gave of widely held assumptions concerning country life, which appealed principally to reviewers and readers. These qualities were also identified with the labourers in the novel. Reviews readily accepted Lizbeth Bede (a carpenter's widow) and Mrs Poyser (a tenant farmer's wife) as representative labourers' wives because of these values. The presentation of their speech in dialect added confirmation.

Adam Bede was produced in the careful and protective environment of the home Eliot shared with George Lewis. He encouraged her work on the novel and went over the manuscript with her. They were both unsure of her abilities and Adam Bede was a cultivated and carefully nurtured creation as a result.⁽²²⁾ The publishers, Blackwoods, were supportive of her⁽²³⁾ and the novel was launched in an atmosphere far removed from the environment and pressures surrounding Hardy and Madding Crowd.

Far From the Madding Crowd

Madding Crowd appeared as a serial in Cornhill in January 1874. It was presented anonymously, and was one of the three current serials in the journal. It was the sole property of Cornhill readers until its republication in two volumes by Smith & Elder.⁽²⁴⁾ Once the reviewers began to notice its presence, the readership widened, but it cannot be claimed that it was as great a success in commercial terms as Adam Bede.

Immediate connection was made by reviewers between the two books, as if nothing in the intervening fifteen years had been published worthy of their notice. Hardy was identified as Eliot by early reviewers, and when it was later discovered that he was not, he was scrutinised as if he had laid claim to be her.

Hardy's first novel, Under the Greenwood Tree led to Madding Crowd since Leslie Stephen, then editor of Cornhill, was sufficiently impressed by it to request Hardy to write a similar rural work for his journal. Stephen considered that "the descriptions of country life"⁽²⁵⁾ in Greenwood Tree were admirable, but he wanted a different plot for a serialised novel:

There is too little incident for such purposes; for, though I do not want a murder in every number, it is necessary to catch the attention of readers by some distinct and well arranged plot.

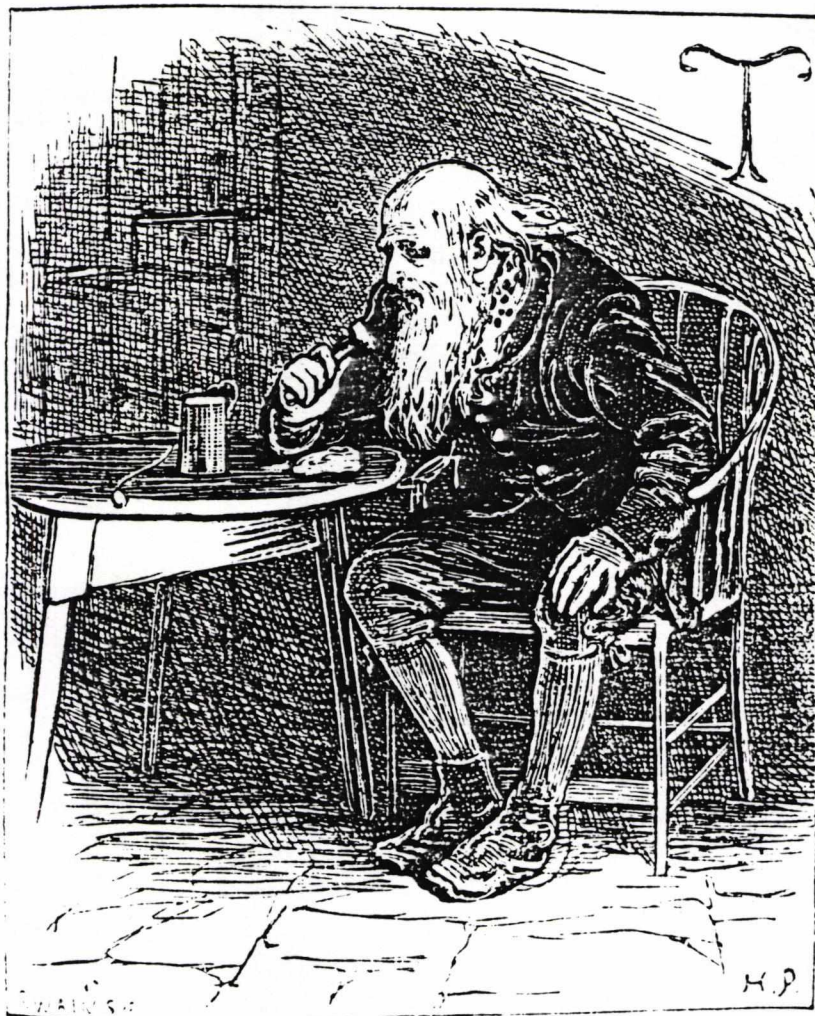
(26)

From its very start Madding Crowd was shaped by different circumstances from those which affected Adam Bede. The whole rhythm of a novel which is serialised is formed by its monthly parts; as each issue has to span several chapters, and must also reach a climax and leave the reader in suspense. Hardy, anxious to succeed⁽²⁷⁾ within what was a new medium for him, achieved the required movement in Madding Crowd. In the first instalment, for example, the hero and heroine are introduced; the hero proposes to the heroine and is refused; and the issue ends with the death of his sheep and the end of his prospects as a farmer. Thus the January issue gave the reader a complete section of the novel and built up concern for Gabriel Oak to last til February when the next stage of his 'career' would be charted. The July issue shows the most dramatic climax. The reader is left on the farm with the labourers waiting for news of the absent heroine. A hint of her activities in Bath is given by the character of Cainy Ball, an unreliable messenger. The possible range of her actions causes suspense. Did she go to see Troy to avert or invite catastrophe? Did she intend to marry Boldwood? What would this do to Gabriel? and so on.

The novel was illustrated by Helen Patterson⁽²⁸⁾ who provided a full-page picture as well as an initial letter vignette for the first word of each instalment. The majority of the larger illustrations were incorporated into the two volumed reprint, in their proper place in the text. In the serialised presentation the picture fronted the opening page each month and operated as a signpost. The reader opened the journal to the serial and there found a picture of a key moment in the

episode about to be read. It did not illustrate the page it fronted at all, nor did the initial letter picture. They were enticements to the reader and they also formed a part of the impression of the novel. In fact, reviewers took the message of the picture more readily to heart than they did the text itself. The pictorial presentation of Hardy's labourers, and his heroine, formed a part of the reason why they came under attack. There was little evidence from the illustrations that the old maltser (Fig. 1) or Liddy (Fig. 2) would form part of the articulate group of labourers Hardy presented. The January illustration "Hands were loosening his neckerchief" (Fig. 3) slants the presentation of Bathsheba. Gabriel has his unconscious head in Bathsheba's lap and the artist shows the "skittish" heroine in a gentle moment. It is not surprising that the character of Bathsheba was something of a surprise after this introduction.

Stephen was an attentive and controlling editor of his new novelist and carefully scrutinised the manuscript for any element which might offend Cornhill readers.⁽²⁹⁾ He had accepted Madding Crowd in outline form and Hardy wrote it as it was being published. The relationship in the novel between Fanny Robin and Sergeant Troy caused Stephen some concern and he particularly desired her pregnancy to be discreetly presented. It is clear his influence was at work when it came to illustrating the issue where Fanny's pregnancy was revealed to Bathsheba. The caption read: "Her tears fell fast beside the unconscious pair" (Fig. 4). It showed Troy kneeling over Fanny's open coffin with Bathsheba watching in an attitude of



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Fig. 8:3



HANDS WERE LOOSENING HIS NECKERCHIEF.

Fig. 8:4



HER TEARS FALL FAST BESIDE THE UNCONSCIOUS PAIR.

distress. The caption meant she was in tears before "the unconscious pair" who were Troy and Fanny. When the novel was republished in book form the illustration was given its proper caption: "Bending over Fanny Robin, he gently kissed her". The part where the "unconscious pair" reference appeared in the novel came before this scene and the phrase described Fanny and her child. Bathsheba was alone when she wept at this discovery. Stephen changed the caption, but not the text, and there is no record of Hardy's response to this false presentation of an important emotional moment in his novel. Perhaps there could be some acceptable delicacy on Stephen's part for obscuring the picture if the changed caption was the only alteration. However, to change the meaning of a line in the novel by adding it to an illustration meant he was attempting to play down the 'vulgar' facts of country life in defence of the feelings of Cornhill readers.

Eliot or Hardy?

Hardy's novel was serialised from January to December 1874; the assumption that it was written by Eliot was based on the first issue. It was a reasonable guess for his contemporaries to make. The review in Spectator on 3rd January 1874 gave evidence:

If Far From the Madding Crowd is not written by George Eliot, then there is a new light among novelists. In every page of these introductory chapters there are a dozen sentences which have the ring of the wit and the wisdom of the only truly great English novelist now living.

The sentences referred to above were those which Hardy used in the introduction of Gabriel Oak. He presented him in a detached, and rather laboured ironic style. Also, it was claimed, the "passage descriptive of the companionship of the stars" was "so learned and so poetical that it seems to be irrefutable evidence of the authorship".(31)

It was a misfortune for Hardy to be confused with Eliot so early in the reception of his novel. It immediately offered reviewers an interesting debating point, and led to a rather severe scrutiny of Madding Crowd. They began their debate in earnest when Cornhill published the last issue:

No conjecture could be more plausible; they deal with the kind of life that George Eliot has more than once chosen to describe, to which in fact, she has almost acquired a prescriptive right, and an opening description of Farmer Oak is a portrait very much in her manner.

(32)

The confusion between the novelists was understandable to the anonymous reviewer of Examiner because Hardy had caused the problem by poaching on the "prescriptive rights" of Eliot. He had written a rural novel on the lines of Adam Bede, and perhaps hoped to achieve the same long-running popularity of that book. Whatever Hardy's motive, the reviewer felt he could not complain when unfavourably compared with Eliot because he had taken the unusual step of writing another low life rural novel. "Mr Hardy is much less of a preacher" than Eliot, the reviewer claimed, but his story was not as deep.(33)

The debate continued into the following year. Westminster for instance claimed in its review that "Far From the Madding Crowd stands to all contemporary novels precisely as Adam Bede did to all other novels some 16 years ago".⁽³⁴⁾ Far from belabouring the unhappy critic who first thought that Madding Crowd was by Eliot, the Westminster reviewer claimed that some good sense was spoken when those comparisons were made and that Hardy deserved to be compared with her. The review was then given over to a minute comparison of the two novels, dwelling on plot and character:

Adam Bede is, if we may use the expression, too much infected with self-consciousness. George Eliot has, by the wealth of her language, and a certain pomp of diction, rather overdone him. We are inclined to say, was there really ever a working-man like Adam Bede? This we never ask about Gabriel Oak.

(35)

Such a question might well be asked of both the heroes of these novels since they are shown to be superlative workmen, capable of a greater skill at their trade than any other character in the novels. The self-consciousness detected by the reviewer in Westminster must lie in Eliot's presentation of Adam's speech which is almost always given in carpentering images. Oak's speech is not shown by Hardy to be self-consciously 'rustic'. Nor did he present him as a philosopher who could be distant from his labour and so view the world in terms of sheep and rick thatching in the way that Adam Bede looked at both trees and men for the straight grain and the true plane.

A review in Observer again attacked Hardy for not being as good as Eliot ("a dauber by comparison"). Eliot, the reviewer felt, was one who knew human nature well, but Hardy only knew "just about as much as the simplest of us". As Eliot knew more than "all of us put together", no one could write so true as she. Hardy, in comparison, showed a "keen love and penetrating eye for the face, changes and operations of nature"⁽³⁶⁾ which qualified him to write a better novel than Madding Crowd, although of course, not quite as good as Eliot. It was Hardy's ability to create in words the same qualities which were admired in landscape art, that gave the critic grounds for a sense of his lost potential. The rest of the review was taken up with debating whether Bathsheba was a lady or not. The labourers were not mentioned, as was the case with the Westminster's review.

Henry James added his condescension to the critical reception of Madding Crowd. He too joined in on the side of Eliot and declared that Hardy had learned from her:

This is extremely clever, and the author has evidently read to good purpose the low-life chapters in George Eliot's novels; he has caught very happily her trick of seeming to humour benignantly her queer people and look down on them from the heights of analytic omniscience.

(37)

This assessment of both authors' treatments of the labourer is not at issue here. The important difference between Adam Bede and Madding Crowd lies in the kind of "queer people" that inhabited the novels, not whether the novelists patronised them in their presentations.

Clever Labourers

The review in Athenaeum brought out the first reference to labourers in the novel: "He is evidently a shrewd observer of the talk and habits of the Somersetshire rustics"⁽³⁸⁾ and he has a "quaint" sense of humour himself.

The critic then went on to accuse Hardy of inaccuracy in his presentation of the "rustics". He gave them too much of himself:

He puts such expressions into their mouths as 'passably well put', 'every looker-on's inside shook with the blows of the great drum to his deepest vitals, and there was not a dry eye throughout the town' and so on - expressions which we simply cannot believe possible from the illiterate clods whom he describes.

(39)

The claim that the "clods" were illiterate cannot be confirmed by the text. The labourers' education was not mentioned by Hardy. Jan Coggan claimed his father read Pilgrim's Progress and they all quoted the Bible. Gabriel and Bathsheba's reading habits were referred to in passing during the novel.⁽⁴⁰⁾ These are the only times he referred to reading. As to writing, Fanny's letter and Bathsheba's valentine make up the list of literacy. The reviewer must have had external knowledge of the "rustics" which was sufficiently strong to claim that a novelist presenting them as literate, was incorrect. According to this critic "rustics" in a novel could not be given any phrases or language which showed wit or reading and still be true. Mrs Poyser's "rustic" wit and wisdom was

however still appreciated.

In the same month a review in Spectator opened on what appeared to be a different note:

The life of the agricultural districts in the south western counties - Dorsetshire probably - is a new field for the novelist, and at least so far as the physical forms of nature and the external features of the farm work are concerned, it has been mastered by the author of this tale. The details of the farming and the sheep keeping, of the labouring, the feasting, and the mourning, are painted with all the vividness of a powerful imagination, painting from the stores of a sharply-outlined memory....

.... from everything the reader carries away new images, and as it were, new experience, taken from the life of a region almost unknown. A book like this is, in relation to many of the scenes it describes the nearest equivalent to actual experience which a great many of us are ever likely to boast of.

(41)

The writer was R.H. Hutton, an admirer of Eliot. (c.f.pp.8:10-8:12)
He opened his review in Spectator on the above 'favourable' note on December 19th, 1874. The praise however soon turned to blame. The very fact that Hardy was presenting something new, and therefore unknown to Hutton meant that his work could not be "trustworthy". Hutton could not believe in the labourers, they must be

.... a treasure house of such eccentric shrewdness and profane minded familiarity with the Bible, as would cancel at once the reputation rural England has got for a heavy, bovine character, and would justify us in believing it to be a rich mine of quaintnesses and oddities, all dashed with a curious flavour of mystical and Biblical transcendentalism.

(42)

Ten years later the collectors of dialect and folklore did show a rejection of some of the 'bovine' image, but in 1874 Hutton was not convinced. After relating numerous incidents within the novel of "intellectual banter" he concluded:

Almost all the labourers introduced in it talk in a peculiar style, deeply borrowed, no doubt, from a study of the Bible, but still applied in a manner in which neither uneducated Churchmen nor uneducated Dissenters (and these people are all of the Church) would dream of applying it.

(43)

Therefore, Hutton continued, as if employing logic, if the "people" in the novel would not "dream of applying" such language, then their counterparts in real life, which Hutton claimed he could not "know" or "experience", would not dream of it either. Hardy must have invested them with his own "satiric vein" and put an "intellectual graft on coarse and vulgar thoughts".⁽⁴⁴⁾ Hutton objected to the profanity of the labourer's speech, not because he could not detect wit in the application of Biblical quotations to other contexts, but because this quickness of mind was to him intellectual. He could not connect the ability to be intellectual, in this sense, with the relatively uneducated labourers.

Whether or not Hardy did invest his labourers with his own "satiric vein" is not the point. Hutton's certainty that he must have done, argued from an external 'knowledge' or 'truth', even while admitting he was unacquainted with Hardy's close observation, is far more interesting. Just as the anonymous critic in Athenaeum felt sure the labourers were "illiterate clods" so Hutton felt sure they were, in truth, but not in the novel, uneducated. Hutton felt Hardy should

be dismissed for "using first rate materials derived from real observation" and corrupting it by "shuffling his own words or tone of thought with those of the people he is describing".⁽⁴⁵⁾ There was praise however for his "water-colours in words, and very fine ones too" but he was condemned for being "too clever"...

Preposterously clever where the world is stupid - too original where he ought to be accommodating himself to the monotonous habits of a world which is built on usage.

(46)

This, Hutton declared, was "a rare kind of mistake".

"The only things we believe in are the sheep and the dogs" claimed James at the end of his review, and repeated Hutton on the question of Hardy's "cleverness". "Mr Hardy has gone astray very cleverly, and his superficial novel is a really curious imitation of something better".⁽⁴⁷⁾ Hardy's mistake was to lack the "aesthetic" view of nature in all its misanthropy which desired only harmonious people in the landscape. It is ironic that Hardy, who tried hard to conform to the format of a successful serialised novel, should discover that he had neglected to conform in his presentation of the labourer. He had not invested his labourer with grace, nor had he shown him as stupid.

Andrew Lang, writing in Academy gave a contemporary slant to the presentation of the labourer in the novel:

The country folk in the story have not heard of strikes, nor of Mr Arch; they have, to all appearance, plenty to eat and warm clothes to wear, and when the sheep are shorn in the ancient barn of Weatherbury, the scene is one that Shakespear or that Chaucer might have watched. This immobile rural existence is what the novelist has to paint.

(48)

Lang then went on to quote Hardy's description of the great barn at Weatherbury where the timeless quality of the country is stressed in the novel, in comparison with the swiftness of time in cities. This part of the novel corroborated Lang's own interest in the immobility of rural life. Lang did not go on to say directly why the novelist had to "paint" this static picture, although the dogmatic phrasing and the reference to strikes in the above extract does suggest that Lang knew of other more animated, less likeable scenes. These 'real' scenes were not, so the inference reads, as fit for painting as those which present the labourer in this novel. The workfolk in Madding Crowd formed a "sort of chorus of agricultural labourers"⁽⁴⁹⁾ for Lang. He considered that Hardy adopted an omniscient role in the novel in relation to them:

He contemplates his shepherds and rural people with the eye of a philosopher who understands all about them, though he is not of them, and who can express their dim efforts at rendering what they think and feel in language like that of Mr Herbert Spencer. It is this way of writing and thinking that gives the book its peculiar tone. The author is telling clever people about unlettered people, and he adopts a sort of patronising voice, in which there are echoes, now of George Eliot, and now of George Meredith.

(50)

The reference to Herbert Spencer must apply to the labourers' misuse of the Bible, and is an unusual application. It is more interesting however to find Hardy accused of patronage when the reviewer did not feel that the labourers were being presented as clever. Lang clearly did not find the labourers in the novel threatening. Therefore he felt that patronage was the element in their presentation which he disliked, not falsity. However, he too objected to their language:

Few men know the agricultural labourer at home, and it is possible that he is what Mr Hardy describes him. The labourers are all humourists in their way, which is a very dreary and depressing way. Odd scraps of a kind of rural euphuism, misapplications of Scripture, and fragments of modern mechanical wit, are stirred up into a queer mixture, which makes the talk of Henery Fray, Cainy Ball, Jan Coggan and especially that of that pre-eminent bore, Joseph Poorgrass. Do labourers really converse like this:

'I look round upon life quite promiscuous. Do you conceive me, neighbours? My words, though made as simple as I can, may be rather deep for some heads'.
'Oh yes, Henery, we quite conceive ye.'
'A strange old piece, goodmen - whirled about from here to yonder, as if I were nothing worth. A little warped too. But I have my depths; ha, and even my great depths! I might close with a certain shepherd, brain to brain. But no; oh no!'

Here is another specimen of rural speech:

'For a drunk of really a noble class, and on the highest principles, that brought you no nearer to the dark man than you were afore you began, there was none like these in Farmer Everdene's kitchen. Not a single damn allowed, no, not a bare poor one, even at the most cheerful moment when all were blindest, though the good old word of sin thrown in here and there would have been a great relief to a merry soul'.
'True', said the maltster, 'nature requires her swearing at the regular times, or she's not herself; and unholy exclamations is a necessity of life'.

And so on. Shepherds may talk in this way; we hope not; but if they do, it is a revelation; and if they don't, it is a nonsense and not very amusing nonsense.

(51)

Lang felt that Hardy was being tasteless rather than clever in his dialogue for the workfolk. Lang admitted that he could not know, for "few men know the agricultural labourer at home". Because of this lack of knowledge, which could also be applied to Hardy, the language of the labourer in the novel was unfamiliar to Lang. He therefore considered it to be untrue, even though his sense of the familiar was not based on knowledge.

To the Saturday critic, the familiar version was not an idealisation, it was Hardy who was presenting, in his unfamiliarity, an ideal labourer:

The English Boeotian has never been so idealised before. Ordinary men's notions of the farm labourer of the Southern counties have all been blurred and confused. It has been the habit of an ignorant and unwisely philanthropic age to look upon him as an untaught, unreflecting, badly paid, and badly fed animal, ground down by hard and avaricious farmers, and very little, if at all, raised by intelligence above the brutes and beasts to whom he ministers. These notions are ruthlessly overturned by Mr Hardy's novel. Under his hand Boeotians become Athenians in acuteness, Germans in capacity for philosophic speculation, and Parisians in polish.

(52)

The reviewer applied the notion of truth so ruthlessly to the novel that it became a weapon to use against writers on the 'plight' of the labourer. The ironic overstatement in the extract makes the presentation of the labourer's plight so black that the labourer becomes less than human.

Taking this exaggerated second-hand view as truth, the reviewer again employing hyperbole, contrasts Hardy's view and shows just how idealised it is. But the confusion and the blurred vision which the writer claimed was the result of trying to bring these two contradictory images of the labourer together, do not result in a reduction of the 'inhuman' view, only of Hardy's view. The question to ask, the reviewer felt, was whether "we have misjudged the unenfranchised agricultural classes" or whether "Mr Hardy has put his own thoughts and words into their mouths". Of course, it must be the latter, and the "suspicion", "shakes our confidence in the truthfulness"⁽⁵³⁾ of the novel. This was the serious point of the review:

Doubting the authenticity of the conversations, we are led to question the truthfulness of such scenes as these. Are they a faithful rendering of real events taking place from time to time in the south western counties, or are they not imaginary creations with possibly some small groundwork of reality?

These are difficulties which suggest themselves to the most cursory reader. But perhaps it does not very much matter (except to the student of the political capabilities of the agricultural labourer) whether either the conversations or the descriptions are true or false.

(54)

I do not claim that Hardy's labourers are more true to life than Eliot's. All I claim, based on the above evidence, was that Hardy's view of them was not popular. It was disturbing to the critics and was firmly denounced. Eliot's view of the labourers on the other hand, was warmly and fondly received. Hardy's novel was presented to the public in 1874. He did not show his labourers as political but

they were very different to the accepted view of slow witted, if not half witted, country people. Here is the mildest version of that position:

It is in truth a purely pastoral idyll, in which, however, the shepherds and shepherdesses are of a very different strain from the Corydon and Phyllis of conventional poetry. They are downright farm labourers, heavy, and slow and somewhat gross, but with touches of awkward humour and a certain sententious method of talk, which is often exceedingly amusing.

(55)

The extract is taken from The Times and shows that the accepted view of the labourer could be made to fit the novel. It is a different view of the novel's labourers from those represented earlier and it is a compromise between the familiar view and Hardy's presentation.

Landscape Painting in Words

Hardy had not 'gone astray' when it came to describing the landscape in his novel. References to his ability to create landscape word pictures have already appeared in the extracts from the reviews cited. It was in fact this quality in the novel which gave it its popularity. James responded well to this element in Madding Crowd:

He describes nature with a great deal of felicity, and is evidently very much at home among rural phenomena. The most genuine thing in this book, to our sense, is a certain aroma of the meadows and lanes - a natural relish for harvesting and sheep washings ...

(56)

It is interesting that Hardy could be recognised as 'true' in his descriptions of the landscape but not of the labourers, within one review. Hardy's receptivity to nature was most highly praised; he was even able to make the unaesthetic pleasing, as the reviewer for Observer pointed out:

The descriptions of farming operations - lambing, sheep-shearing, and the rest - are admirably done, and far from being gratuitously obtruded, are introduced most naturally and felicitously, and subserve the purpose of the narrator in a striking manner ...

(57)

Although all reviews applied truth quite literally to works of fiction, the many references to painting, and the praise Madding Crowd gained by the representations of landscape within it, suggest a connection with the "aesthetic" view of nature. The language and the surmises from landscape art concerning the truth of the artist are clearly at work in the critics' minds. Whether the portrayal of landscape was in oils or words it evoked the "aesthetic" response with its assumptions about the author's purposes and achievements.

Despite the high tone of offence recognisable in some critics in their reception of Hardy's view of the labourers, the novel was nevertheless known as an idyll and a pastoral poem. Whenever these terms were applied to Madding Crowd the review which contained them firmly kept to the descriptions of nature in the novel and ignored the labourers. The inhabitants of an idyll would not be the characters in the novel for they, according to the critics, were too ironic and too clever. Literate, profane and witty remarks were not made by 'rustics' in

idylls. Indeed "rustics" should not appear in idylls at all, judging by the reviews, only nature itself, or references to the unchanging order of the country.

.....oOo.....

It can be seen from the reception of these two rural novels that Eliot and Hardy were seen to present two different kinds of fictional labourers. Eliot's was not just popular, but it was a fond image which confirmed an existing "knowledge" of their 'quaintness' and lack of religion. However, rural paganism, when as articulate as Hardy portrayed it, was unacceptable. Eliot's novel charmed, despite the weaknesses of plot and characterisation. In contrast, Hardy's novel was only charming in parts, and although the landscape painting in the novel ensured its popularity with readers, the reviewers were not so much affected by the idyll as to accept his labourers. Although both novelists were presenting their first full novels to the public, only Eliot was acclaimed as a novelist in full command of the material. Hardy evoked a sense of potential to reviewers, which they felt he would develop in time when he had ceased to be too "clever". Eliot was admired for her wisdom, but Hardy's cleverness was not a virtue. This first impression of the two books was mellowed as both authors produced more, and the inequality of the initial response was lost in the generally accepted sense that both Eliot and Hardy never wrote so well again.

There was one exception to the general disparagement of Hardy for his presentation of the labourers. It came from the eye-witness rural commentator Kegan Paul. He reviewed "The Rustic of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy" for Merry England in 1883. He began by commenting that "Literature has had little to say of the labourer" which he felt was not because his life was not interesting, but because "those sections of society to which writers belong know nothing about him". He felt Eliot saw the labourer from outside because "intimate personal contact is lacking". Hardy on the other hand, "seizes from their own point of view the characteristics which Eliot has seen from without". (58)

The distinction he draws between Eliot and Hardy is not only original but it also provides a key to the various fictional labourers so far discussed within this section. He takes the distinction one step further and clarifies the problem of the many and varied labourers described by writers to the journals. It was not so much the difference between fiction, fact or myth, but between posed and unposed. Kegan Paul's analysis completes this excursion into the presentation of 'genuine' fictional labourers:

George Eliot's rustics always behave as though the upper classes were studying them, and they were posing for their pictures. Mr Hardy's are the natural men and women free from all trammels, showing themselves as they do to each other. Because most people fail to see the labourer thus, they consider Mr Hardy's novels are untrue to Nature.

(59)

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Eight

- (1) There were also novels set around gamekeepers and poaching, the most famous perhaps being Thomas Frost's Paul the Poacher, a melodrama published in parts in 1848. Aside from the fictional works already cited in Chapter Five, there was also a novel by Mules, P.H. George Doggett, Keeper, a Story of a Devonshire Manor 30 Years Ago London & Manchester 1887. References to poaching appear in Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859) and Oida's The Massarenes (1897). A reprint in 1973 of The Confessions of a Poacher edited by Geoff R. Worrall is a new edition of Watson's Confessions.
- (2) Of course, many novels did set scenes in the country, but not in the life of the village. There is a world of class difference between the excursions taken into the country in the novels of Mrs Gaskell and Henry James for instance, and a novel actually set in a village.
- (3) The letter was dated 20th February 1859. It is cited in Carroll, D. George Eliot: The Critical Heritage London 1971 p. 72
- (4) Anon. "Review of Adam Bede" Saturday Feb. 26 1859 pp. 250-1
- (5) ibid. p. 251
- (6) ibid. p. 251
- (7) Collins, W.L. "Adam Bede" Blackwoods Apr. 1859 p. 490
- (8) Allardyce, A. "The Life of HRH The Prince Consort by Theodore Martin" Blackwoods May 1859 pp. 611-625
- (9) Collins, op.cit. p. 498
- (10) ibid. p. 491
- (11) ibid. p. 504
- (12) Dallas, E.S. "Review of Adam Bede" The Times Apr. 12 1859 p. 5
- (13) The letter was dated 10th July 1859. It is cited by Carroll, op.cit. p. 85.
- (14) Mozley, A. "Adam Bede and Recent Novels" Bentleys Jul. 1859 pp. 436-7
- (15) ibid. p. 437 and p. 450
- (16) Hutton, R.H. "Review of Adam Bede" National Jul. 1860 p. 205
- (17) Hutton, R.H. "George Eliot" in Essays Theological and Literary Vol. II London 1871 p. 313 (reprints from his journal articles).

- (18) Morley, J. "Review of George Eliot" Saturday Jun.
16 1866 p. 723
- (19) James, H. "Review of George Eliot" Atlantic Monthly
Atlantic Oct. 1866 pp. 485-6
- (20) Appleman, P., Madden, W.A., Wolff, M. (eds)
1859: Entering an Age of Crisis Indiana 1959
c.f. Altick, R.D. "The Literature of an Imminent
Democracy" pp. 216-7
- (21) Eliot, G. Adam Bede Chapter XIX "Adam on a Working
Day" p. 219 in Collins' Illustrated Pocket Classics
- (22) c.f. George Lewis, DNB
- (23) Blackwood even took her side when the Rev. Joseph
Liggins was claiming he wrote Adam Bede and was
setting up collections for himself since the money
for the book was going to the "imposter" Eliot.
As Eliot's pseudonym caused this confusion, and as
she did not wish to break it at this point, Blackwood
was being very tolerant. The letters to The Times
covering the dispute with Liggins cover the period
April. 12 1859 to Jun. 30 1859 and SGO himself entered
into the debate. Perhaps of most interest are the
letters from H. Anders (Apr. 15 1859 p. 10 The Times)
supporting Liggins, and Jun. 6 1859 p. 10 from Eliot
herself in The Times.
- (24) c.f. Purdy, R.L. Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical
Study Oxford 1968 for further information on the
various editions of Hardy's works.
- (25) ibid. Appendix II p. 336
- (26) ibid. Appendix II p. 336
- (27) c.f. Gittings, R.W.V. Young Thomas Hardy London 1975
Chapter 18 "Success and Marriage" pp. 187-197
- (28) She married the poet William Allingham during her
work on Hardy's novel. She signed herself Allingham
for the first time on the November illustrations.
- (29) Purdy, Appendix II, pp. 336-9, op.cit.
- (30) Anon. "Review of Far From the Madding Crowd" Spectator
Jan. 3 1874 cited in Lerner, L.D. & Holmstrom, J. (eds)
Thomas Hardy and his Readers London 1968 p. 23
- (31) ibid. p. 24
- (32) Anon. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Examiner Dec. 5 1874
c.f. Lerner & Holmstrom, p. 25 op.cit.
- (33) ibid. p. 25
- (34) Anon. "Belles Lettres" Westminster Jan. 1875 p. 365

- (35) ibid. p. 266
- (36) Anon. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Observer Jan. 3 1875
c.f. Lerner & Holmstrom, p. 35, op.cit.
- (37) James, H. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Nation Dec. 24
1874 p. 424
- (38) Anon. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Athenaeum Dec. 5 1874
p. 747
- (39) ibid. p. 747
- (40) Hardy, T. Far From the Madding Crowd Chapter 44
"Under a Tree - Reaction" p. 33 in Macmillan London
1974 edition shows Bathsheba's favourite reading,
both sad and happy, which she lists to Liddy. Oak's
basic reading is listed in Chapter 8 "The Malthouse -
The Chat - News" when he moved his possessions to
Weatherbury, c.f. p. 105.
- (41) Hutton, R.H. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Spectator
Dec. 19 1874 p. 1597
- (42) ibid. p. 1597
- (43) ibid. p. 1598
- (44) ibid. p. 1598
- (45) ibid. p. 1599
- (46) ibid. p. 1599
- (47) James, Nation p. 434 op.cit.
- (48) Lang, A. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Academy Jan. 2
1875 p. 9
- (49) ibid. p. 9
- (50) ibid. p. 9
- (51) ibid. p. 9
- (52) Anon. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Saturday 9 Jan. 1875
p. 57
- (53) ibid. p. 58
- (54) ibid. p. 58
- (55) Broome, F.N. "Recent Novels III" The Times Jan. 25
1875 p. 4
- (56) James, Nation p. 424, op.cit.
- (57) Anon. "Review of Thomas Hardy" Observer, p. 33 op.cit.
- (58) Kegan Paul, C. "The Rustics of George Eliot and
Thomas Hardy" Merry England May 1883 pp. 40, 44 & 47.
- (59) ibid. p. 48

Introduction

The question of whether the labourer was seen as posed or unposed, which is presented by Kegan Paul as a matter of 'inside' or 'outside' viewpoint, is today inextricably bound up with class perceptions. To Kegan Paul it was simply a question of geographical closeness, which he appeared to feel overcame all class barriers, or he would not have been able to place Eliot 'outside' while keeping himself 'inside' together with Hardy. Clearly Kegan Paul felt that years spent in a rural parish qualified him to be an 'insider' and he proved this by being able to recognise the labourers presented in Hardy's fiction as 'real' or natural. The most important points about Kegan Paul's observations, are the absence of any sense of class differences, and the fact that he could actually see Hardy's labourers both in the novel and outside in the country. As has been shown, there were few labourers in Adam Bede and Kegan Paul's apt choice of words for them "posed" and "self-conscious" describes both them and the artisan hero and heroine of that novel. Nevertheless it was Eliot's presentation which was recognised and celebrated as real by the vast majority of readers and journal reviewers. Hardy's labourers were ridiculed and dismissed.

Throughout this study the agricultural labourer has been shown slowly emerging into view. Section One showed first undifferentiated workers in the fields who merged with the landscape; then the ramblers and naturalists brought the labourer slightly closer, close enough for words to be exchanged. Finally the labourer was in the foreground, under a confusion of attack and defence for being, or not being clever enough, to

be a poacher. In Section Two eye-witnesses, all like Kegan Paul, claiming an 'inside' view, and geographical closeness, actually saw labourers and wrote of what they saw. The resulting plethora of images of the labourer, and the different ways of seeing seemed to me to have a single uniform factor: they all felt fictional. It was for this reason that the "magic circle's" response to 'genuine' fictional labourers was in turn examined, and this examination resulted in the clear insight offered by Kegan Paul. The many and varied labourers were not so much fictional as posed and self-conscious.

Jefferies, as will be seen, emphatically proves that this 'posed' quality was not actually present in the interaction between labourer and observer. It was not the result of being looked at by a person from the city, who was also from a different class and culture, but was caused by the vision and the language of the observer alone.

The element of class differentiation, missing from Kegan Paul's distinctions between Eliot and Hardy, would seem to 20th century reviewers to be too important to exclude for fear of a naive reading. However, it will be remembered that Kegan Paul's simple geographical requirement was 'proved' by the writings of Frederick Clifford, examined in Chapter Six. Clifford lived for a period in the country and this proximity resulted in an 'inside' viewpoint. He did not change his politics to do this, nor his class allegiance. There was another motive for his change in language, and I believe it was far more significant that his move from city to country. Clifford was a reporter with the pressure of daily deadlines, and he was sent to cover a rural labour dispute which turned out to be static for two to three months. Lacking incident he was forced to observe and for that brief period the labourers

became his livelihood. The linguistic result of this extra impetus was a changed form of writing which could encompass the hitherto unobserved labourers and make them visible to the readers of The Times and still be acceptable to the "magic circle". It was not simply a kindly interest which caused this change in language, but the pressure of his task. I am not denying that Clifford was a fair minded man, nor that his physical move away from the city assisted him to create this change in language, but the main motive was the pressure of his work.

Richard Jefferies and Frederick Clifford were the only writers for the "quality" press who achieved a change in the language of reports and articles so that the labourer could be seen. This chapter explores Jefferies' work and the motives for his change in writing will be examined. It is interesting to note that he was considered to be a 'real' 'insider' by his contemporaries, whilst Hardy, who was much better qualified for that title, was never considered except by Kegan Paul. In fact, Jefferies was far more of an 'outsider' both by birth, being the only son of a small farmer, and by inclination, being essentially a solitary character. Like Clifford he was forced to find 'copy' which he acquired by walking in the country and looking with the same absorbed interest at everything he found there, including the labourer. Seeing people at work, meeting them in the lanes and footpaths, observing them at lunch and at wayside inns everyday necessarily reduced these sights from the significance of a pose into the ordinary sights he was accustomed to see. The geographical factor which Kegan Paul identified worked for him too and when he wrote of the labourers for the "quality" journals, he transferred this unposed and natural viewpoint into some

of his writings, and like Clifford, created a new form.

The Newly Fashionable Richard Jefferies

The end of the last decade saw a sudden spate of new editions of Richard Jefferies' anthologies. These new paperback editions carry prefaces from a variety of Jefferies enthusiasts, including John Fowles. There is an aptness in Fowles presenting After London in the new World's Classic series,⁽¹⁾ which matches Jefferies' presentation of Gilbert White of Selbourne for his own time. Fowles does not refer to any debt the opening harvest scenes in Daniel Martin might owe to Jefferies, or to Jefferies' biographer, Edward Thomas. Nevertheless Fowles as a contemporary writer stands in relation to Jefferies in the 1980s as Jefferies did to White in the 1880s. It is as if a cycle of influence has turned its full circle. The colourful new editions of The Hills and the Vale, The Pageant of Summer, The Gamekeeper at Home and The Amateur Poacher, Hodge and his Masters and The Story of My Heart display quite prominently the extent of his revival. It would be interesting to examine the parallels between the Jefferies revival of the 1940s and that of our present day. The social and economic climates of these two austere periods perhaps show a need for nature writings when the discomforts of an urban-industrial civilisation are most acutely felt. Such a project however is not my present purpose. The importance of these new editions of Jefferies is that they mark him out from those of his fellow journalists who have not been similarly re-discovered. They rightly proclaim that Jefferies is unique among them. Jefferies is a difficult writer to discuss in relation to his presentation of the agricultural labourers, since his

writings on them fluctuate to a considerable degree. It is necessary to understand this aspect of his work and critics vary in their interpretations of these fluctuations and the contradictions they cause. Merrion Williams was persuaded by some of Jefferies' writings that he was a Marxist.⁽²⁾ Queenie Leavis described Jefferies' novel Dewy Morn as a Left book and claimed that Amaryllis at the Fair (after commenting on its "unfortunate title") was a masterpiece. She also condemned his 1940s revivalist Samuel J. Looker for putting forward only Jefferies-the-"lofty thinker" and Henry Williamson for admiring Jefferies as his "Alter Ego".⁽³⁾ Edward Thomas⁽⁴⁾ and Edward Garnett⁽⁵⁾ approved of the mature Jefferies, and his later writings convinced them both that he was a prose-poet. Although each of these critics could be accused of selecting only those parts of Jefferies which suited them, all their judgements are well supported. When so many writers declare Jefferies to be different things they cannot all be accused of misreading. Nor indeed of a partial reading, since outside of a study of Victorian journalism it is an easy matter to dismiss any of his writings which do not fit as commissioned or bread-and-butter pieces not worthy of the critic's attention.

There is one critic whose perception of Richard Jefferies and whose book The Country and the City have greatly influenced this study, and that is Raymond Williams. Like Kegan Paul, Williams gives attention to Jefferies' geographical relation to the labourers,⁽⁶⁾ but he is in error to state that Jefferies moved to Swindon in 1877,⁽⁷⁾ for it was at that date that he moved away from the country to the suburbs of the city and settled in Surbiton. He was living in Swindon in 1872, when

he wrote to The Times and gained the attention of the "magic circle" but prior to that he had lived on the small farm owned by his father. In 1878 his family removed from Wiltshire too, leaving Jefferies his memories of rural life, but no patrimony. This latter point is vital in an understanding of Jefferies' position which Williams rightly describes as "marginal and paradoxical".⁽⁸⁾ Williams looks at the images conveyed by Jefferies' writings and at the reality of his life, and sets these facts against the social reality of Wiltshire during the period Jefferies lived there. He concentrates on his late essays, which were written in illness and without an editor or a publisher in mind, where a strong political sympathy with the labourer can be found. Working backwards from these writings he makes understandable Jefferies' fluctuations concerning the labourer in class terms, charting Jefferies' own rise in Victorian society from the "son of a struggling smallholder" to what could be called "petit-bourgeois". Jefferies as journalist was seen by Williams, but it was not necessary for his thesis to compare the form of Jefferies' writings in the journals with his contemporaries. For Williams, Jefferies formed a link in the chain of rural interpreters and writers "Cobbett, Arch, Ashby, late Jefferies, Thomas Hardy".⁽⁹⁾ My own study has a much narrower framework and within the context of the "quality" journals the significance of Jefferies derives from the way he wrote, able to both conform to the images of the labourer and able to bend these linguistic forms so that his contemporaries within the "magic circle" of "quality" journalism could also see the labourer. The current fashion in Jefferies, and his critics, all claim significance for him, but it is important to note that the

Jefferies who has been presented within the Victorian fashionable interests in leisure does not appear significant. He wrote on landscape art (although he was not asked to review paintings) and he contributed naturalist and nature Rambler articles (although he was not seen as a popular science writer). He also wrote on both hunting and poaching, and some of the contradictions which are answered in various ways by his critics, are clearly seen in his presentation of the poacher. There is little indication from this record, so far, of his contributions to the interests in nature, that Jefferies could be significant. He appears as a professional writer in the early chapters of this work, ably fitting himself to prevailing tastes, contributing to fashionable interests in a clear and lucid style which is more natural and therefore more easily overlooked than that of his extrovert companions.

Contradictions and their Causes

There are four possible causes for Jefferies' contradictory contributions to the 'plight' of the labourer. The first is the consideration of his health and its effect on his stable view of the world which brings in his awareness of the labourer's observation of him; the second is to place him within the context of rapid changes in rural life which his lifetime spanned; the third examines his work within "quality" journalism and the fourth takes up from Williams some of the important aspects of Jefferies' class position.

1. Illness

Jefferies was seldom a completely healthy man. His first major illness was in September 1867 when he was 19 and living with his parents at Coate:

He wrote to his aunt to say that while, a few days ago, he could walk thirty miles, now he could scarcely take thirty steps; his eyes are too weak to write much ... He is losing his place on the North Wilts Herald because it is now the busiest time of the year. A few days later he is improving, but still weak and thin. 'I did too much yesterday in the way of study - my head when I got to bed seemed to swell big enough to fill the room'. A fortnight later still he is suffering from over-exertion, but has been better. At the end of the month he is 'still weak and miserably thin'... not long after this illness, he writes to say that he has been ill of an eruptive fever, and can only walk up and down in the sun behind a good thick hedge... On 28th August 1868, his handwriting is slow, precise and in pencil: 'Thank God I am getting better now, and can sit up in bed; but I am so miserably weak, and my legs are as thin as a grasshoppers' ...

(10)

He was seriously ill again in December 1881 and never recovered his health. As Jefferies did not begin to write for the journals until 1872, he had only eight to nine years of relatively good health during his writing career.

These extracts from Thomas' biography show Jefferies after his first serious illness, able to write, read and obviously to walk, if only a little and in a sheltered environment. That the ability to walk meant much to him is shown in his sad observations about his legs. It was the long illness from 1881 until 1887 which really wasted his strength and he died "a skeleton" according to Thomas. He underwent major surgery four times in 1882 to no avail. In September 1885 he was confined to bed for seven months in constant pain. He died on 14th August 1887 "of exhaustion and chronic fibroid phthisis".⁽¹¹⁾ He was recollected by "One who Knew Jefferies" for Pall Mall readers in 1891 as:

a man of moods, and like many invalids his temper was very uncertain: one moment amiability itself, at another bitter as gall in his remarks on men and things. He gave me the impression from certain observations that he had suffered some considerable injustice in his early youth at the hands of a local family in Wiltshire, but afterwards, in a letter repudiated the notion. 'There has been no great sorrow over-shadowing my life', he afterwards wrote to me, ascribing his worried look to ill-health. 'Suppose the strong Hercules tied by the leg just like a dog in his tub for three years - do you think he would look jovial? While you sat with me talking I felt on the verge of fainting the whole time. It is a ghastly feeling - fainting hardly expresses it. I kept up by resolution.

(12)

The "One who Knew Jefferies" somewhat insensitively brings forward an explanation for contradictions not just toward the labourers, but to people in general. Jefferies himself, in this extract, pointed to his illness as reason enough for irritation. The undertone of dislike in the letter quoted ("do you think he would feel jovial?") is understandable, as is the forceful presentation of the meeting between them from Jefferies' viewpoint, which obviously did not intill the guilt he intended.

Jefferies' illness, apart from being one obvious explanation for contradictions shown in his writings from 1881 onwards, was also responsible for his fine observation. Thomas claimed, for instance, that it made him more susceptible to colour. It made him a slow walker too and therefore a more attentive observer. More important than these points, his illness made him think about work, not only his own labour, but the labour of others in the country. Williamson pointed out how hard Jefferies worked:

It is one thing to enjoy the natural scene for itself, or for one self: to relax and be mentally free; it is quite another thing to go out, deliberately to observe - or in the hope of observing something which can be turned into words, words, words, for pence, pence, pence, to support children, wife and self - in that order.

(13)

This perpetual pressure on an ill man caused him to show at times in his writing a work-oriented attitude. He saw labour in things which other rural rambblers only saw as harmonious. For example, in Chapter Three an article by Jefferies, where he encounters an artist in the fields, is scrutinised. Jefferies, as is observed in that Chapter, did not see the artist as an amateur but as a worker, earning a living. Thomas and Williamson both claimed that Jefferies' writings were fed by his excursions into nature and his working nature diaries proved that this was so. Therefore Jefferies assumed that this was also the case for the artist. The same note is also seen in the following extract from "Golden Brown" which was published in Pall Mall in 1884. Here Jefferies feels himself as closely observed as he has been observing and it is work which comes to his mind as the motive for this scrutiny. Although in this case the work of those he observes makes him feel as if he were idle.

As they passed they regarded me with bitter envy, jealousy, and hatred written in their eyes; they cursed me in their hearts. I verily believe - so unmistakably hostile were their glances - that had opportunity been given, in the dead of night and far from help, they would gladly have taken me unawares with some blow of stone or club, and, having rendered me senseless, would have robbed me, and considered it a righteous act. Not that there was any bloodthirstiness or exceptional evil in their natures more than in that of the thousand-and-one toilers that are met in the highway, but simply because they worked - such hard work

of hands and stooping backs - and I was idle, for all they knew. Because they were going from one field of labour to another field of labour, and I walked slowly and did no visible work. My dress showed no stain, the weather had not battered it; there was no rent, no rags and jags. At an hour when they were merely changing one place of work for another place of work, to them it appeared that I had found idleness indoors wearisome and had just come forth to exchange it for another idleness. They saw no end to their labour; they had worked from childhood, and could see no possible end to labour until limbs failed or life closed. Why should they be like this? Why should I do nothing? They were as good as I was, and they hated me.

(14)

Jefferies did not speak to these unposed labourering women, he merely observed them as they passed. There is no possibility of knowing whether he really caused such a violent reaction by his supposed idleness or not. There is a certain morbidity and fear of physical violence in the description of Jefferies and three field workers passing in a lane, but if his idleness caused that sensitivity, it also caused an intense awareness of the labour of the agricultural worker. However, it could be said that these women exerted a rather horrible fascination over Jefferies. For all that he walked past them and later saw them, again from a distance, when they were outside a public house which he was passing, he still managed to see them very distinctly:

They were clad in 'rags and jags' and the face of the eldest was in 'jags' also. It was torn and scarred by time and weather; wrinkled, and in a manner twisted like the fantastic turns of a gnarled tree-trunk, hollow and decayed. Through these jags and tearings of weather, wind and work, the nakedness of the

countenance - the barren frame - was visible; the cheekbones like knuckles, the chin of brown stoneware, the upper-lip smooth, and without the short groove which should appear between lip and nostrils. Black shadows dwelt in the hollows of the cheeks and temples and there was a blackness about the eyes.

(15)

It is a very sharp observer who can take in such detail in the time it takes to walk past people, which leads to the suspicion that there is far more in the description than perhaps could have been gained from such an impression. The old woman becomes like a witch, malignantly cursing him for his idleness, an old taunt for Jefferies. (16)

This close 'illness' reading, because of its accent on the personal, should not be allowed to distort the material. The article is compassionate to the labouring women and each detail explains their fierce resentment. It should not be read just as an interesting insight into the health of a struggling journalist. Although the details appear hallucinatory, they are also a naturalist's recordings, quite within keeping of the myopic "scientific" view of nature. Moreover, the article provides evidence, not just of the "scientific" view of nature, and not only evidence of Jefferies' sympathy with the labourers, but of a new language form. The labourer is clearly visible in this article and in a form which did not lead to the rejection which Hardy received. It was because of his ability to write in this way that Jefferies was even considered to be "one of" the labourers. (17) by his contemporaries. There could be no other explanation for so unusual an observation. Although in Section Two other examples were given by the eye-witnesses: Lady Stradbroke, Jessop, and Girdlestone, of aggressive labourers, they all had a ready explanation for what they saw as an aberration, Lady Stradbroke

objected to men with pipes in their mouths whose lack of deference was for her a sign of the evil influence of outside agitators. The surly labourers who spat on the ground when Jessop spoke to them and would not give a civil answer to his questions were to him an example of rural stagnation. Similarly even Girdlestone used the same arguments when the Union moved too far to the left for his liking. Hardy's clever and profane labourers provide a final example, for these qualities were found to be threatening to reviewers and so were seen as unreal and improbable. Jefferies did not reach for a hasty solution. Knowing himself to be an 'outsider' by virtue of his 'idleness', his clothes - in short his class, he did not seek to avert the reader's eyes away from these aggressive labourers nor find them a comfortable explanation. He neither criticised or disparaged the labourers for looking at him in the way he described, but sought in himself its cause.

Jefferies' illness is therefore one reason for his contradictory stance towards the labourers. This was not simply because it altered his mood and perceptions but because of the economic necessity it produced. These factors, as has been shown in the extract from "Golden Brown" could cause a change in his language which resulted in a new form of writing which encompassed the labourer.

2. Agricultural Change

There is only one critic, besides Williams, who present contextual reasons for Jefferies' range of responses to the labourer. W.J. Keith is Jefferies' most thorough critic and

in both Richard Jefferies: A Critical Study and The Rural Tradition he argues that Jefferies' contradictions over the labourer were ready responses to the changes in rural life during his own life time. This explanation shows Jefferies as a professional writer who was not obliged to be consistent in writings published and later thrown away by readers, but was required to report upon the immediate 'truth' as he saw it and as his editors demanded. According to Keith, he simply responded to the different changes in agricultural life as they occurred, and this included seeing the labourer, or not seeing the labourer at all, or presenting a pro-farmer view where the labourer was seen in a harsh light and finally seeing the labourer sympathetically. (18)

It would therefore, on this hypothesis, not be contradictory, but locally and temporarily true for Jefferies to fluctuate in his presentations of the labourer. He could show them as he did in 1884 in "Golden Brown" but earlier, in 1872 he could present The Times readers with the following:

They are too ungrateful for the many great benefits which are bountifully supplied them - the brandy, the soup, and fresh meat readily extended without stint from the farmer's home in sickness to the cottage are too quickly forgotten. Never once in all my observation have I heard a labouring man or woman make a grateful remark; and yet I can confidently say that there is no class of persons in England who receive so many attentions and benefits from their superiors as the agricultural labourers.

(19)

This superior stance and critical voice speaks without sympathy or insight. The letters to The Times in 1872 (there were three of them, all like the above) were written from Swindon at a time when he actually knew labourers. Jefferies gave the address of his father at Coate Farm, instead of his own Swindon address and this gives the reason for his harsh view of the labourers, for it is a farmer's viewpoint. (20)

A farmer, in the year of the inauguration of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, when Wiltshire labourers were joining up, might well have written such a letter from such an address. (21) Keith and Thomas both argue for this 'truth' and they point to Jefferies' stance two years later in "John Smith's Shanty" where he revealed some of the motives for the 'ingratitude' of the labourer:

'He minded when that sharp old Miss was always coming round with tracts and blankets, like taking some straw to a lot of pigs and lecturing his 'missis' about economy ...'

(22)

However, their motives for preferring the 1874 response were to do with style as well as with 'truth'. They both preferred the new form which Jefferies employed in "John Smith's Shanty". But Keith's idea that each of Jefferies' responses were in keeping with the changes in his time are, in fact, defeated by "John Smith's Shanty" since it presented a very unusual viewpoint on the labourer. In 1874 the only other person who was writing to the "quality" press in such a sympathetic vein was Frederick Clifford. It has been shown in Chapter Six how alone he was in this view. That Jefferies had the ability and could, at a very critical time for the agricultural labourer; use it to present a compassionate picture, makes him a significant writer of his period.

Both explanations so far for Jefferies' contradictory stance towards the labourer are plausible enough, but only one: his health, explains his motive for writing in a new way. To say that he was recording for the moment, as suited his profession merely makes his writings a barometer for the shifting attitudes towards the labourer at different times and in different journals. Although this may well be true it does not make Jefferies a significant writer. My third cause of contradiction places his writings within the context not just of agrarian upheaval, but squarely within his own medium, the "magic circle" of the journals.

3. The Exigencies of Journalism

It has been seen that Jefferies could write with reasonable facility within the modes of the "aesthetic", "scientific" and "hedonist" views of nature. The ways in which the labourer was seen within these three categories have been set out in their respective chapters. Necessarily, when placed side by side, writings from the "aesthetic", the "scientific" and the "hedonist" view of nature will show contradictions. The readers and editors of the "quality" journals lived presumably quite comfortably with the varying views of the labourer they placed in their journals through both leisure interest articles and the 'plight' of the labourer debate. When we see those same articles now assembled into anthologies, out of context of the journals, the different views seem personal to Jefferies. They were not so personally significant however, and placed in the wider context of the "quality" journals the importance of these contradictions is reduced.

Placed within his own medium Jefferies was not only recording 'things as they are' but was recording them as the editors wished them to be recorded. In comparison with other professional journalists described in this work, Jefferies appears to be less successful than they. For example, he failed to secure for himself the first essential for a journalist : an editor who would readily take his work and give him a secure place, unlike many of the prolific writers already described.

Jefferies instead wrote for a number of the "quality" journals without any regular pattern. Almost every anthology of his articles includes contributions to different journals even when the individual articles were written around the same time. Open Air⁽²³⁾ is a good example, containing articles from English Illustrated Magazine (English Illustrated) Pall Mall, Longmans, Standard, St. James, The Times and Good Words. His first steady connection, the one which enabled him to move his wife and children to London, was with Pall Mall. The editor, Frederick Greenwood⁽²⁴⁾ accepted Gamekeeper at Home, Amateur Poacher, Wild Life in a Southern County and Round About a Great Estate. Thereafter Jefferies failed to find a regular space for any length of time, and though he serialised one volume for a journal or newspaper, it would seem that he was not invited to produce another. Although clearly connected articles which will later make a book, as exemplified above, would benefit a journalist, unless these were commissioned the time taken to present them as a cohesive unit could not be spared from the time spent in writing for a weekly wage. Hodge and his Masters was a once-off collection for Standard and so was Green Ferne Farm for Time, but these were the last of the series he risked.

Later, in the late 70s Jefferies contributed regularly to Livestock Journal (Livestock) but this was not a prestigious paper, and was a long way from providing the literary acclaim Jefferies required in order to succeed. Although the early commissions established his name, Jefferies failed to secure another favourable niche for himself. He was working in a competitive field and although there was a market, there was also a wide choice of professional and amateur observers already within the "magic circle". In order to be published, Jefferies had to try to capture a market, either by conforming to the established 'taste' in rural writings or by experimenting in a new form which would secure him a regular space.

In 1873 Jefferies published a pamphlet titled Reporting, Editing and Authorship which sets out his own views on writing for a living. He shows, even at that early date in his career that he was fully aware of the fashionable tastes of his day:

To create a taste in the public requires a great genius, it is therefore wisest to study the existing taste, and so cast the story that it may suit the fashion of the day; for a fashion there is in novels as in everything else...

Special knowledge of a special subject then before the public; or a name, as an author is required...

If the author attempts to rise on the ground of his special knowledge of a subject, and adheres to that, and makes himself superior in it, his success will be certain, and comparatively easy. For the public will always pay for work.

(25)

Unfortunately for Jefferies, despite his pragmatic advice to other journalists, it was not so easy after all to secure a niche. And no matter how hard he worked, he found that the public would not always pay.

Therefore, to be added to the historical explanation of his fluctuations in stance toward the labourer, must be the contribution toward variation made by his inability to find tenure in the medium which published his work. Above all else, there were accepted and different ways of presenting the labourer within the leisure interests and the 'plight' debate. All these factors explain his contradictory position toward the labourer, and the pressure upon him to create a market for himself within these two areas of specialisation which were his forte, provided yet another impetus for the creating of a new linguistic form.

4. Class

The final area for examination is the effect of Jefferies' physical movement from country to city and his movement in class terms from his established place as heir to a farm (even a small one) to the marginal class position of a journalist. Even though his father was not a successful farmer, he was once an independent owner of land. Jefferies rose in class terms far above his father, as far as outward appearances are concerned. Williams has already adequately covered this ground but I would like to add a 20th century illustration of Jefferies' move. If a visit is taken to Coate Farm cottage where Jefferies was born (now the Jefferies' museum) and the house in Worthing where he died (now a large and inhabited middle class home) then the impact of his journey is brought home. Jefferies had a lot to lose, but like his father, he too was unsuccessful. He never became a member of the "magic circle".

It is possible, therefore, that Jefferies' own fund of compassion for those who worked unremittingly (as he did) for their living, without hope of turning their labour into land (just as was true for him) would be affected at those

moments in his life when he perceived how far he had come, and what prospects lay before him. Jefferies' appetite for solitary observation and introspections make this speculation highly probable, but it was the demand of his specialisation within journalism which kept such material for identification constantly before him. Whether this last psychological interpretation is 'true' or not, it is certain, and greatly to Jefferies' credit that he was sensitive enough to make the required cogniscent leap to write about the labourers clearly, as was also the case for Clifford before him.

All the factors examined showing Jefferies insecurity in his work and therefore his ability to maintain himself to the standards he had selected, lead to the production of a new kind of writing which has so far been shown in only one, very powerful, example. The sections which follow demonstrate this new form in full.

Jefferies' Realism

The new form which Jefferies created is a blend of Realism and natural history. It encompasses the labourers without assuming the reader to feel any solidarity with them and without turning the article into fiction. Most importantly, it does not project an image of the labourer, moral, ideal or sentimental. Jefferies created this form out of what he considered to be his two main skills as a writer. One he was acclaimed for, which was his ability to write observantly in the style of Gamekeeper at Home and Amateur Poacher. Jefferies was given the title of expert on the country despite his difficulty in gaining access to the "magic circle". He gained this reputation from his writings in Pall Mall. A

review by Kebbel of Gamekeeper at Home in Quarterly declared that he was:

One who knows the English Peasantry well, who is indeed one of themselves, and is admitted to their confidence on all these subjects ... Mr Richard Jefferies, who ought to know the minds of English villagers, if any man in England does. And for our part, we entirely believe him.

(26)

The other was his private ambition to be a novelist. Every critic agrees that he was not a good novelist, while also agreeing that he desired to be one. Jefferies' novels: The Scarlet Shawl, Restless Human Hearts, World's End and Dewy Morn were not and are still not, recognised as successful. Dewy Morn is more interesting, despite all its faults, because it is a Realist novel. Jefferies was an over-scrupulous writer and lost himself and the reader in endless truth telling in Dewy Morn. The scene where the heroine Felise, sees Martial, the man she loves, riding towards her, for instance, is told to the reader three times. First from Felise's viewpoint, second from Martial's, and thirdly in authorial comment on why they are inarticulate when they actually meet after seeing each other in the landscape. His later novels: Amaryllis at the Fair, Greene Ferne Farm, Hodge and his Masters and After London cannot quite be called novels. At least not 19th century novels. Amaryllis is modern for its time, since it has little plot, romance or incident, it leaves the ending open and is quite short. This form, together with the detail, make it a satisfying work. Its form was acquired by Jefferies through writing in a new way in the "quality" journals. He did not display an acquired knowledge when contributing on the labourer. Instead his writing appeared to be based on an 'inside'

intimate acquaintance which creates a sense of trust in the reader. He took this ability further than his "Country Books" show,⁽²⁷⁾ and in Hodge and his Masters employed the "strengths of the tradition of the realist novel"⁽²⁸⁾ together with his "scientific" observation in order to create a new form which would encompass a labourer less idealised, and far more in the present, than any other writer in the "quality" journals.

The New Form: Hodge and his Masters

In 1879 Jefferies wrote a series of articles for the Standard. In 1880 those articles were presented as a book in two volumes, the articles becoming chapters, under the title Hodge and his Masters. Hodge persuades us that it is, almost is, a novel and not a series of articles. It has an overall shape; the chapters are linked; and it has characters and dialogue. Most critics of Jefferies treat it as a novel⁽²⁹⁾ seeking evidence of his political stance or his literary abilities from its pages, and it is often reviewed in terms of his development. However, Hodge was written for a newspaper, possibly commissioned with a restriction on word limit and content, certainly subject to the editor's and the reader's approval. It is not a novel, but the articles are not just articles, they are nearly short stories, and it is this element together with those listed above which makes for the sense that Hodge is more a novel than an anthology. This novel-ish air about Hodge is the main reason why it was accepted by the "magic circle", for this quality allows the labourer to be fully and sympathetically seen without causing adverse comment.

In Hodge Jefferies writes like a man on the verge of writing

fiction, but not quite achieving his potential. Some of the 'stories' open in a novelistic manner, and then, having caught the reader's attention, change back again to observing. One such example is "A Modern Country Curate"⁽³⁰⁾ where Jefferies describes the decline of the curate from an enthusiast to an invalid, worn down by his work in the village. He opens the chapter with dialogue: "He can't stroddle thuck puddle you: can a'?" "He be going to try a' will leave his shoe in it".⁽³¹⁾ The tenacity of the curate is then demonstrated by his ability to "stroddle thuck puddle". But before he concentrates upon the curate, Jefferies introduces the labourers who have given the opening statements. The description of them is given in a static manner:

They wore a species of smock frock gathered in round the waist by a band over their ordinary dress; these smock frocks had once been white, but were now discoloured with dirt and the weather. They were both stout and stolid-looking, hardy as the trees under which they stood.

A sack half filled was on the ground close to the trunk of the oak, and by it was a heap of dried sticks, to be presently carried home to boil the kettle.

The one stood with her lap half full of acorns; the other with a basket on her arm. The two urchins lay down on the ground, and peered from behind a thorn stole, their brown faces scarcely distinguishable from the brown leaves, except for their twinkling eyes.

(32)

The opening of the chapter has little to do with the 'story' which follows. The women are not seen again, and presumably are only connected with the curate because they are part of his parish; their function lies in the way in which they inform us about him, and give us a clue to his eventual failure.

In that sense they serve as minor characters in a novel or drama, serving the main plot. This difference in presentation is important, for it gives the labourers a new and active role in journal writing. Jefferies has not only enabled Standard readers to see them, but also to experience being seen through the identifying medium of the curate. Although the labourers are still 'picturesque' and are described in terms of the landscape (sturdy as oaks - faces as brown as oak leaves) they are not static like the trees themselves. They are in fact spying on the curate and loudly commenting upon him, thus making him the object.

The opening of "The Farmers' Parliament" is less dramatic than "A Modern Country Curate" but it too opens as if it were a novel:

The dorrway of the Jason Inn at Woolbury had nothing particular to distinguish it from the other doorways of the same extremely narrow street. There was no porch, nor could there possibly be one, for an ordinary porch would reach half across the roadway. There were no steps to go up, there was no entrance hall, no space specially provided for crowds of visitors; simply nothing but an ordinary stree-door opening directly on the street, and very little, if any, broader or higher than those of the private houses adjacent. There was not even the usual covered way or archway leading into the courtyard behind ...

(33)

The repeated negatives give a sense of expentancy. Why should the Jason Inn be brought to our notice in this way? The answer does not come till another six pages, pages filled with minute observations as to the pavement, the traffic, the pedestrians, the shops, moving onto general observations concerning trade in country town, back to the present market day, and finally returning to the door of the Jason Inn, its

interior and the steps leading to the room where the action will finally take place. During this time the reader's sense of expectancy has been disappointed, the interest artificially stimulated for an action or an incident or 'novel' has been fed with solidly naturalist observations.⁽³⁴⁾ Details so presented gain a heightened significance, which carries the reader on with a certain amount of suspense. Jefferies creates an atmosphere of waiting, which is at first seen as the narrator's own wait for the meeting to begin, and later the wait for the freak summer storm to pass. Meanwhile the readers wait for a punch line which is given in the last paragraph. There we learn that 'Hodge' is also caught in the downpour, but in the open fields where there is no shelter. Although one of the details supplied informed us that there were forms for 'Hodge' in the Parliament, we were not informed why he did not attend until the very end. The farmers and the speaker had the time for debate but this rested on the labourer, out of sight, reaping. Jefferies brings the labourers into focus and shows how their labour created the farmers' leisure. It is a surprise to be whisked from the Jason Inn to the fields, but this is the force of a punch line and Jefferies has worked on the reader well to create this surprising ending.

This new version of the "scientific" view of nature did more than encompass the labourer as shown above. Jefferies went further. He used the labourers as the link between chapters, and thus gave them a central rather than a background role. In Chapter Six of Hodge for instance, two cameos are bridged by the introduction of the labourer. The chapter opens with the description of a road. Two vehicles are travelling toward each other. Jefferies conveyed the

warm weather by his usual focus upon natural things:

The clover dusty, the convolvulus dusty,
the brambles and hawthorn, the small
scattered elms all dusty, all longing
for a shower or for a cool breeze...

In the silence and stillness and brooding
heat, the larks came and dusted themselves
in the white impalpable powder of the road.
Farther away the partridges stole quietly
to an anthill at the edge of some barley.

(35)

Sandwiched between these two descriptions of the flowers and birds is the introduction of the reapers. They are bending so low that they disappear from sight on the level plain. Those on the tallest vehicle can see them, see their "bowed backs" and note their response to their magnificent four-in-hand as the reapers stand and wipe their brows and the boys among them give "a distant hurrah". They are once again onlookers, seeing the owners of the land in the landscape as an object. The labourers have this additional new role tacked on to their traditional role of background material. But whereas Jefferies uses the natural world to inform us of the heat, the reapers are used to give information about the people in the two vehicles. The inhabitants of the four-in-hand bow and smile at those in the shabby gig because the latter own the land and employ the reapers, they are their visible sign of wealth and power despite their poorer vehicle. In the second part of this chapter Jefferies returns to the reapers again and gives them a third role to play:

They had been at work all day in the uplands among the corn, cutting away with their hooks low down the yellow straw. They began in the early morning, and had first to walk two miles or more up to the harvest field. Stooping, as

they worked, to strike low enough, the hot sun poured his fierce rays upon their shoulders and the backs of their necks. The sinews of the right arm had continually to drive the steel through straw and tough weeds entangled in the wheat. There was no shadow to sit under for luncheon, save that at the side of the shocks, where the sheaves radiated heat and interrupted the light air, so that the shadow was warmer than the sunshine. Coarse cold bacon and bread, cheese and a jar of small beer, or a tin of weak cold tea, were all they had to supply them with fresh strength for further labour.

At last the evening came, the jackets so long thrown aside were resumed, and the walk home began. After so many hours of wearisome labour it was hardly strange that their natural senses were dulled - that they did not look about them, nor converse gaily. By mutual, if unexpressed consent, they intended to call at the wayside inn when they reached it, to rest on the hard bench outside, and take a quart of stronger ale. Thus trudging homewards after the exhausting day, they did not hear the almost silent approach of the bicycle behind till the rider rang his bell. When he had passed, the rider worked his feet faster, and swiftly sped away along the dry and dusty road. He was a tall young gentleman, whose form was well set off and shown by the tight-fitting bicycle costume. He rode well and with perfect command - the track left in the dusty was straight, there was no wobbling or uncertainty.

'That be a better job than ourn, you', said one of the men, as they watched the bicycle rapidly proceeding ahead. 'Ay', replied his mate, 'he be a vine varmer, he be.'

(36)

The bicycle farmer is condemned by these phrases before he is properly introduced. After the careful reconstruction of the reapers' day and all its privations, his arrival in his conscious way, with bell, machine and carefully fitting suit, even down to the track the bicycle left, gives the effect of a vain and shallow existence. The sarcastic comment

"he be a vine varmer, he be" sums him up.

This would be a long passage to serve just as a comment on the bicycle farmer, even though every incident in the reapers' day undercuts him. (It even makes his reasonable demand for access on the road seem presumptive and falsely superior.)

The labourers ~~are~~ present in the extract, at first in the usual "scientific" view which would make them almost unnoticed if it were not for the fact that Jefferies shows them noticing. In the second part the detail makes their silence and their desire for beer quite understandable. He shows that they are quite as clever as Hardy's labourers, and capable of making dismissive remarks, but does this without drawing undue attention to their perception which is given after the weight of their labour. Despite using the stereotyped word "Hodge" Jefferies has explained the silent, stolid labourer and made human those characteristics which previously were used for ridicule. A special significance of the passage must be noted, which is its present day (1880) setting. Jefferies, by introducing a bicycle farmer (even the chapter title itself is designed to draw attention) makes his presentation of farmers and labourers in Hodge precisely up to date. This is a rare quality to find in the journals on rural matters and demonstrates Jefferies' refreshing lack of nostalgia.

He could go even further than that. The sense conveyed in the above passage, and in the "Farmer's Parliament" that the labourers provided the wealth of the other country residents is explicit as well as implicit in Hodge. Another intersection, where the chapter on "The Bank" gives way to "The Old Newspaper" illustrates this:

If any public movement is set on foot, the banks strive as to which shall be most to the fore, and, aided by its antiquity, the old Bank, perhaps, secures a social precedence. Both managers belong to the 'carriage people' of the town.

Hodge comes into the place, walking slowly behind cattle or sheep, or jolting in on a wagon. His wife comes, too, on foot, through the roughest weather, to fetch her household goods. His daughter comes into the hiring fair and stands waiting for employment on the pavement in the same spot used for the purpose from time immemorial, within sight of the stately facades of the banks. He himself has stood in the market-place with reaping hook or hoe looking for a master. Humble as he may be, it is clear that the wealth in those cellars, - the notes and gold pushed over the counters in shovels - must somehow come from the labour which he and his immediate employer - the farmer - go through in the field.

(37)

The labourer's appearance is quietly inserted. It is not over-played or assertive but it places the bank's philanthropy and social position in context. The matter of fact tone which follows the clear statement that his labour plus the farmer's brings money (actually present by the shovelful in notes and gold) for others, shows no emotion. All is simple detail and quiet observation, like the fact that the bank's imposing exterior can be seen from the traditional spot where labour waited for hire, the nearness again showing that the monetary gain did not go to "Hodge" or to his daughter, or even to the farmer.

One element in Hodge which easily preserves Jefferies from the accusation of presenting 'posed' labourers is his refusal to write in the past. In the bridging section between the "Old Bank" and the "Newspaper" cited above for instance, he

was pleased to note that labourers no longer stood picturesquely for hire but placed advertisement in the local newspaper instead. He shows no nostalgia for another 'golden age' of rural life, and this makes him quite unique. He did make comparisons in Hodge, often disparaging, between the loyal old "Hodge" and the self-sufficient young "Hodge" but these lack the glamorisation and idealisation revealed in other journalists' writings.

Jefferies also had a considerable interest in new farming methods and the majority of the 'stories' in Hodge are concerned with different methods of farming, most of them new. I do not however, wish to present a picture of Jefferies as a man who welcomed all change, whether for good or bad, without differentiation. He greatly regretted changes which could be called analogous to his own change in class position, for example in "Country Girls". In this 'story' he lamented the growth of prim and properness amongst the daughters of farmers and gives a sharp contrast between the animation of the 'natural' young women and the dullness of the unfortunate ones who were concerned to ape society manners.

Standard was a Conservative paper and Jefferies' presentations of the labourer are given in it under the perjorative name "Hodge". However, just as the stereotype of the jolly and antiquated farmer is missing from the book, so is the stereotype of the stupid labourer, despite the title. After Standard published it, Jefferies did contribute again to the paper, but only nature rambler articles. He was not, as far as can be known, commissioned to write again in the same form as Hodge. A similar fate met him when he made an early attempt

to write in the new form for Fraser's.

The New Form: "John Smith's Shanty"

As was the case with the articles quoted above from Hodge, "John Smith's Shanty" has an opening sentence which instantly captures attention: "He was standing in the ditch leaning heavily upon the long handle of his axe". It is a novelistic beginning, the reader does not know who 'he' is, nor what he is doing presented in such a stance. Two long descriptive paragraphs follow and answer the last query, but the name of the character is not revealed until after the details of his work and appearances are given. They are naturalist details:

His chest was open to the north wind, which whistled through the bare branches of the tall elm overhead as if they were the cordage of a ship, and came in sudden blasts through the gaps in the hedge, blowing his shirt back, and exposing the immense breadth of bone, and rough dark skin tanned to a brown-red by the summer sun while mowing. The neck rose from it short and thick like that of a bull, and the head was round, and covered with a crop of short grizzled hair not quite grey, but fast losing its original chestnut colour. The features were fairly regular, but coarse, and the nose flattened.

(38)

The 'fiction' opens on John Smith felling an elm in the winter and stopping for a lunch of bread and cheese when he hears the whistle of the noon express train. He eats his lunch at the roadside and is joined by a hedger-and-ditcher of 64 who complains of his life; the squalor and toil over the years to maintain his wife and large family. After work Smith meets a navvy of 18 and learns of the money to be earned away from the farm. The high wages,

however, are only to be artificially kept up by living at home, walking the four miles to work and remaining single. John Smith reaches his home, and is immediately under verbal attack from his wife. She berates him for spending his wages on drink, one consequence of which is that there is nothing but a stolen swede for their dinner. She also implies that this lapse in standards is responsible, by example, for the 'shame' of their eldest daughter. Polly went into the workhouse that very day in order to have her illegitimate child. Dinnerless, Smith goes to the public house and quickly gets drunk. He loses his way home and sleeps in a field. In the early morning, the young navvy, starting his long walk to work, finds Smith and rouses him sufficiently for him to get home. Returning to his wife a scene ensues and Smith strikes her. Five days later he is in court facing a charge of assault. He is sent to prison for fourteen days but the court costs are paid anonymously. Nevertheless, for the duration of his imprisonment, his wife and four children must either starve or join Polly in the workhouse.

This is the 'story' of John Smith, which also carries the two brief 'stories' of the hedger-and-ditcher and the young navvy. The whole of the article is an attempt to make the labourer intelligible to the reader through the medium of a muted fiction. It partially succeeded. It was the fiction which made the understanding easier and if Jefferies wanted to present to the Fraser's editor and readers a new way of seeing the labourer which was closer and more sympathetic, then he could not have chosen a better form. The partiality of the success is caused by Jefferies' inability to gauge the

readers' knowledge of the labourer. For instance, when John Smith spat on his hands before grasping his axe, Jefferies was too much in the nature rambler mode, at the reader's elbow, agreeing with a presumed reaction that this was an "apparently gratuitous piece of dirtiness". (39)

However, he did not wish this reaction to obscure the fact that spitting on the hands was necessary in order to grip the implement properly. It was not only, pointed out Jefferies, that the English axe being straight, demanded a tighter grip than the curved American axe, which was not employed in farming because of our "curiously conservative country", but it was also because John Smith's hands were rendered too hard to grip:

The continuous outdoor labour, the beating of innumerable storms, the hard, coarse fare, had dried up all the original moisture of the hand, till it was rough, firm, and cracked or chapped like a piece of wood exposed to the sun and weather.

(40)

The information works to correct first a supposed squeamishness in the reader, and second to explain the action in a sympathetic way. But it is quite heartening to read Jefferies making asides which show how forward thinking he was on farming matters. He did not wish the labourer to be picturesque and to toil in the same grinding fashion because it was 'traditional'. If the American axe was easier to use, then he clearly was impatient to see it used.

There is however, in the important year of 1874, no reference in this article to unionism. This absence can only be construed as tactful, since the rest of the article is clearly up to date in its setting and the details are all sympathetic

to the labourer.

It should be observed at this point in the expose of Jefferies' new style that for it all encompassed the labourer extremely sympathetically, presenting 'unposed' labourers from an 'inside' viewpoint, Jefferies appeared to be interested only in the portrayal, not in the task of making deductions from the picture he so able drew. Thus when "John Smith's Shanty" ends on the climactic question: "This is no fiction, but an uncompromising picture of things as they are. Who is to blame for them?", despite the fact that two more pages follow, they shed no more light on the problem of "who is to blame" than the story itself. Within the 'story' all the characters are presented as helpless to improve their lot, which is curious since in Hodge Jefferies showed himself capable of presenting various new methods of farming which would help the farmer survive the depression. It is also a matter of curiosity that Jefferies attempted a new style at time when it might have paid him better to have produced writings within rather outside the established format. Frasers for example never took another article like "John Smith's Shanty" from him again.

However, Jefferies did have a certain name within the "magic circle" and in one remarkable instance this enabled him to pass off the new style as a nature Rambler article. "Walks in the Wheatfields" was taken by English Illustrated and published in two parts. Although it is true Jefferies did take the reader on a walk by wheatfields in it, he did not address the reader in the usual companionable or instructive Rambler manner. Instead he posed another set of difficult questions comparable to "Who is to blame for them". In this case the questions relate to the hard labour, as well as beauty

he saw in the harvest field. "Does it not seem bitter that it should be so?" he asked. It is such an unusual question that his long description of reaping deserves full inclusion:

Their necks grew black, much like black oak in old houses. Their open chests were always bare, and flat, and stark, never rising with rounded bustlike muscle as the Greek statues of athletes. The breast bone was burned black, and their arms, tough as ash, seemed cased in leather. They grew visibly thinner in the harvest-field, and shrunk together - all flesh disappearing, and nothing but sinew and muscle remaining. Never was such work. The wages were low in those days, and it is not long ago either, I mean the all-year-round wages; the reaping was piece-work at so much per acre - like solid gold to men and women who had lived on dry bones, as it were, through the winter. So they worked and slaved and tore at the wheat as if they were seized with a frenzy; the heat, the aches, the illness, the sunstroke, always impending in the air - the stomach hungry again before the meal was over, it was nothing. No song, no laugh, no stay - on from morn til night, possessed with a maddened desire to labour, for the more they could cut the larger the sum they would receive ... So hard you see is the pressure of human life that these miserables would have prayed on their knees for permission to tear their arms from the socket, and to scorch and shrivel themselves to charred human brands in the furnace of the sun ...

(41)

There is again in this very painful piece of reading quoted above, a certain identification with the labourer. The pressure of work experienced in the harvest field is surely a pressure known in a different form by Jefferies. The brutal way in which he shows the detail of suffering also reveals his personal investment. He saw the labourer visibly grow thinner in the fields that he walked each day (although in this extract, written when he was too ill to walk, he does refer back in time). All the manifestations of that hard labour are shown in its effect on their anatomies as is in

keeping with the "scientific" view of nature. Jefferies recorded each detail and presented the labourers in true close focus.

His new form could not help but create compassion, but it prevented political action as a result of that arousal of feeling. Jefferies did not take a wide or an impersonal or an economic view. He did not theorise or make deductions from the observation which is again in keeping with the "scientific" view of nature. He merely recorded.⁽⁴²⁾ The key question "does it not seem bitter" was the resort of helplessness, for all his speculations on wealth and labour. Jefferies could see the central difficulty and knew that the harvest scene was both beautiful, and in its human suffering, ugly. To hold both these awarenesses in the mind is a rare and difficult undertaking. His response to this acute and brave vision was to faithfully record both the facts in a form which made them equally clear. He had no other solution to offer.

Nor, I think, could one have been expected of him. We are too demanding of our significant writers and are disappointed in them if they not only have the quite considerable ability to understand their own age, develop a form of writing which makes an aspect of it clear to future generations as well as their own time, earn their living, keep their health and sanity - all this - and provide a solution as well. Jefferies living at a time of great change, suffering bad health without a regular means of support apart from his own labour, able to see rural life and the labourer as free from class bias and nostalgia as is possible. He not only saw these things clearly but he perfected a way of writing which made his observations clear to the reader, writing with great skill

in a blend of the arts of the naturalist and the novelist. And perhaps, as he could not provide any political analysis or solutions himself, he should be all the more congratulated both on his honesty and in referring this question back to the readers and writers of the "quality" journals. For they were the people with power and authority in Victorian society and it was fitting that this matter be brought home to them through the writings of the journalist Richard Jefferies.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter Nine

- (1) After London is a new candidate for Worlds Classics.
It was not chosen for the original series.
- (2) Williams, M. Thomas Hardy and Rural England London 1972
- (3) Leavis, G.D. "Lives and Works of Richard Jefferies"
Scrutiny VI Mar. 1938 pp. 435-46
- (4) Thomas, E. Richard Jefferies, His Life and Work
London 1909
- (5) Garnett, E. "Richard Jefferies" Universal Review II
Nov. 1888 pp. 357-371
- (6) Williams, R. The Country and the City London 1973
p. 192
- (7) ibid. p. 192
- (8) ibid. p. 192
- (9) ibid. p. 196
- (10) Thomas, op.cit. pp. 55-6 1978 edition
- (11) Williams, Rop.cit. p. 192
- (12) Anon. "Recollections of One Who Knew Jefferies"
Pall Mall Sep. 22 1891 p. 9
- (13) Williamson, H. "Some Nature Writers and Civilisation"
in Essays by Diverse Hands Oxford 1960
- (14) Jefferies, R. The Open Air London 1885 pp. 31-2 1948
edition
- (15) ibid. p. 29
- (16) Kebbel, T.E. "Game and the Game Laws in England"
Quarterly Jul. 1885 p. 233
- (17) Thomas, op.cit. p. 59
- (18) Keith, W.J. The Rural Tradition Toronto 1975 c.f.
the chapter devoted to "Richard Jefferies".
- (19) Jefferies, R. Toilers of the Field London 1892 p. 228
1898 edition
- (20) Williams, Rop.cit. p. 193
- (21) Thomas, op.cit. p. 73
- (22) Jefferies, Toilers of the Fields, op.cit. pp. 187-8
- (23) Jefferies, Open Air, op.cit.

- (24) Frederick Greenwood (1830-1909) journalist. Greenwood started writing for the journals when he was 23. He became editor of Queen in 1861 (three years later) and was asked to jointly edit Cornhill with George Smith the following year. He was the first editor of Pall Mall.
- (25) Jefferies, R. Reporting, Editing & Authorship Swindon 1873 pp. 20-1
- (26) Kebbel, op.cit. pp. 233-4
- (27) Thomas, op.cit. Chapter IX pp. 113-136
- (28) Williams, R. op.cit. p. 194
- (29) Williams, M. op.cit. Chapter 2 "Country Writing 1840-1900"
- (30) Jefferies, R. Hodge and his Masters, London 1880 pp. 213-227 1890 edition
- (31) ibid. p. 213
- (32) ibid. p. 215
- (33) ibid. p. 1
- (34) c.f. Keith, Rural Tradition, op.cit. for his recognition of Jefferies' naturalist style.
- (35) Jefferies, Hodge, op.cit. pp. 86-7
- (36) ibid. pp. 96-7
- (37) ibid. pp. 262-3
- (38) Jefferies, Toilers of the Fields, op.cit. p. 176
- (39) ibid. p. 176
- (40) ibid. p. 176
- (41) Jefferies, R. "Walks in the Wheatfields" English Illustrated Jul, 1887 pp. 668-9
- (42) c.f. Anon, "Literature" Athenaeum Dec. 8 1880 p. 765 where the writer dismisses Jefferies as a "cataloguer"

The discussion in the foregoing chapters addressed the question of whether changing agricultural conditions brought about any corresponding change in the presentation of the labourers in the 'quality' journals. Such change as was evident poses the questions as to how it came about and why such an adaptation of style and language was not more far-reaching. In this last chapter these questions may be addressed. Many of the responses amounted to little more than evasions.

EVASIONS

As has been seen in the discussion of 'the aesthetic view of nature' evasion was encouraged by readers and writers in order to keep the labourer limited to a figure in the landscape. Where, as in Mason's Girls Dancing, the labourer was brought into the foreground, it was to present an idyllic picture. The reviewers congratulated Mason on this accomplishment. They confessed their awareness of a 'reality' which existed outside fine art, but insisted that it was unfit for their eyes.

The 'aesthetic view' can also be seen in Chapter Six, in Lady Stradbroke's image of labourers who existed in 'reality' but were not reflected in fine art. She illustrates well how that

'artistic' view was applied out of the frame, in a political argument based on the ownership of land. Lady Stradbroke evaded any criticism of her treatment of the labourers on her husband's estates. She felt her 'charitable' efforts to keep them picturesquely dependent absolved her from any responsibility for their conditions. She insisted that they had been stirred up by 'paid agitators' who exploited their gullibility.

SGO, in Chapter Seven also demonstrated the far-reaching quality of the 'aesthetic view' when he referred to picturesque cottages on the manor estate as "brick pets". He understood that the view of the landscape from the manor windows must be preserved. If tumbledown cottages were too insanitary for the doorstep, then purpose-built picturesque cottages provided harmony in the landscape, leaving the labourers' homes in the village to artistically decay.

Nature, Landscape and Art

The 'aesthetic view of nature' transmuted any country setting, whether farm lands, habitations or parklands, into landscape art. Chapter Three demonstrated how those who worked in the landscape, farmers and labourers, did not share this taste. The holders of the aesthetic view did not take a utilitarian or functional view of land as fertile or infertile. Instead they viewed nature with a leisurely and cultured eye which looked only for harmony and beauty. More than money and leisure

was required, the viewer should also have an awareness of fine art and have read or imbued fine writing from Virgil to Wordsworth. With these literary and artistic thoughts and fancies behind the eyes, as it were, there was no avoiding an 'aesthetic' appreciation of nature.

It has been seen that there were visions of the country which were threatened, if not actually spoilt by a change in the local habitants. To those who valued the artistic qualities they found in nature, all change was to be fought rigorously. Landscape gave them peace, contentment and beauty and this would be disturbed by an independent workforce co-existing with them. Lady Stradbroke's worst fears of disorderly men with pipes in their mouths reeling round her peaceful lanes were fears of a blot in the landscape - an eyesore. The smock-frocked yokel who lived in a tumbledown cottage was a part of the values to be found in nature for so many of these writers and readers. It was easy to rest within this peace if the labourers who lived in nature in a picturesque way were accepting of their role. The most to be feared was articulate labourers, complaining, poaching and striking. A moral evasion was demanded by such a view, which saw people as figures and homes as 'effects'. This evasion was achieved by assuming that the labourers were 'children' who knew no better, or were literally like the cattle, "bovine". Their silence was taken as acquiescence.

The Country and the City

Such a view was essentially a city view, remote from the problems of making nature provide a living. Nature, in its remoteness from the city provided a relief from work, people and the strains of metropolitan life. Nature was highly valued by those who felt the tensions of living in a time of great industrial change and urban expansion. Nature in contrast was believed to be changeless. It offered escape into isolation and the solace of beauty. When the figure in the landscape began to speak and to claim an urban likeness, then that solace, beauty and remoteness were threatened. Evasion was necessary in order to avoid facing the 'reality' and to keep the distance. It was also employed in order to escape censure for the 'plight' of the labourer. Put under such pressure the 'aesthetic view' became critical and saw the labourers as ungrateful, drunk and easily influenced by Radicals. The labourer was then castigated for being ugly, angular and unpaintable. In short, for daring to upset the idyll.

Idealisation

As has been seen, it was not simply a case of 'reality' clashing with the 'idyll'. The closer focus on the 'plight' of the labourer resulted in a partial recognition. However, this recognition merely replaced the idyll with an idealisation. The eye-witnesses showed that their view of nature was not 'aesthetic' but moral. They saw the tumbledown cottage as a moral eyesore

because of its overcrowded and insanitary qualities. They were not content to observe the lines of reapers from afar as figures in the landscape, but insisted on a closer look and found much moral ugliness. They wanted upright and dignified labourers, given no grounds to criticise their masters. They wanted them to appreciate the values of an urban middle class without aspiring to any other aspect of that life. Those who held the 'easthetic view' were pleased to note that the labourers were different to themselves. In contrast the eye-witnesses wanted the labourer to be far more like-minded yet still remain in their own setting.

This idealisation of the labourer which praised moral conformity, nevertheless repeatedly encountered the fact that many labourers fell short of the ideal. Evasions are most evident when the eye-witnesses attempted to explain the differences between labourers. They knew there were labourers who liked to drink, who did not strictly enforce morality upon their teenage children and who did not appear to object to living in large families, taking 'holidays' collectively with the rest of the village. These had to be seen as the uneducable, the dregs of the village and the ne'er-do-wells.

RECOGNITION

There were two writers who achieved a full recognition of the labourer free from evasions and idealisation. Frederick Clifford and Richard Jefferies could see the labourer with a compassion which was not Radical. Of all the writers discussed only

Clifford and Jefferies achieved a new form of writing which encompassed and was sympathetic to the labourer. These two writers achieved a relatively clear view of the labourer, unusually free from the stereotyping of their medium and culture. Clifford used his clarity of vision to better effect than Jefferies, for he actually influenced opinion which in turn brought about arbitration for the labourers in the Lincolnshire Labour League. It was a local solution to a particular situation, but it was a triumph. Jefferies was writing more generally, and was not in the same dramatic position which would enable him to bring about a change in attitudes at a time of crisis. Moreover, he dealt less in facts than in interpretation and worked instead to bring clarity to the murky areas of fiction, myth and idealisation concerning the labourer. Both Clifford and Jefferies encountered a linguistic problem which in their different ways they faced and overcame: the problem of form.

The Problem of Form

As has been seen, there were several forms of language available to the writers of rural subjects which were carried by the 'quality' journals. The three distinct leisure activities promoted by the journals all demanded and created their own language modes. The dramatic and relatively new subject of the unionised role of the labourers was discussed in the journals as the 'plight' of the labourers in its own mode. This was a mixture of languages taken from the city and from the rural leisure activities. It is noticeable that the

writers who responded to the 'plight' took up elements of the language employed by the writers on the 'scientific view of nature'. The eye-witness writers employed the authenticating personal mode of the field naturalist, persuading the reader of their "knowledge" by reference to local detail. Attention to detail was also a naturalist's practice. They were anxious to be taken as truthful reporters and despite the personal references to their own "knowledge" wanted to discuss the topic with 'objectivity'.

The mode of writing adopted by the writers within the 'scientific view' was the only choice for adaptation of those which were readily available to writers and acceptable to editors. As has been shown in Chapter Four, the scientific view was not hostile to the labourers, unlike the other modes. Science also offered a useful weapon to combat the forces of fiction: myth, stereotype, idyll and idealisation. Only "knowledge" and detail could answer these evasive yet attractive images.

Fiction itself, as was exposed in Chapter Eight, was acceptable as a carrier of truth only if the projected image of the labourer within the fiction was acceptable. Anything new in fiction concerning the labourer was not considered credible.

Therefore the writers who wished to have their version of the truth accepted could not present the labourers in a new way in fiction. It required a merging of fact and fiction to produce

a form which would convince. This was Jefferies particular skill.

Clifford and Jefferies found a solution to the problem of form for themselves and for one point in time. Clifford adapted the existing 'scientific' mode and made it encompass the labourer; Jefferies took it further by incorporating Realist fiction within it and so creating a new form. There was no complete resolution in the 19th century of the way in which nature could be seen which retained both a recognition of its beauty and its meaning for those who lived and worked in it. There is still the same problem of form for our 20th century. Posed and unposed, spoilt and unspoilt, recreation and work have to be reconciled within our view of nature too. We still do not like to accept the industrialisation of the countryside even though it brings employment, housing, sociability and better transport to those who live there. We cannot look at a field of sheep and also think of lamb chops. There is still no acceptable language form which permanently reconciles the antitheses of nature. Even though we are now in a far better position to know the 'reality' than the 19th century writers, rural myths still hold attractions for us too, and nature is still considered to be primarily our recreational area.

Notes

This Bibliography gives a full list of the journals and newspapers consulted together with texts which were employed in the work (alphabetical) followed by those which help to shape it (alphabetical, broken into Contemporary and Modern).

For an almost complete Bibliography of Richard Jefferies' works and critics see Keith, W.J. Richard Jefferies Oxford 1965. W.J. Keith, together with The Richard Jefferies Society is currently compiling a complete bibliography of Jefferies' writings.

Notes on Sources

The periodicals, general, art and science were consulted in The British Library. They are available bound together in yearly volumes which exclude endpapers, advertisements, title slips and covers. Usually two title pages, or covers are bound into the volume. As a consequence of this practise, begun in the 19th century, invaluable data has been lost. The researcher is also perplexed to discover the exact monthly parts of such journals as Good Words, Art Journal, Magazine of Art without the title pages.

The newspapers consulted are housed in the Institute of Historical Research, British Library Newspaper Collection at Colindale and in Cambridge University Library. The last library has Pall Mall on open shelves, and the Institute of Historical

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I consulted the Dictionary of National Biography for all the biographical details given on the writers in this work. Of course, some needed an expansion of the information given in the Dictionary through memoirs, biographies etc. It was however, important to learn of the lives of these journalists through a Dictionary compiled by a member of their "magic circle" in its early years. George Smith and Leslie Stephen worked on the Dictionary and Smith certainly risked his health as well as the profits of Smith and Elder, Cornhill and Pall Mall in his increasingly exclusive interest in its compilation. Many of the writers in this study assisted him, as well as appearing in the Dictionary under their own names.

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Westminster Review

Art

Art Journal
Athenaeum
English Illustrated Magazine
Magazine of Art
Portfolio

Periodicals, continuedScience

Annals of Botany
Anthropological Review
Eclectic Review
Journal of Physiology
Knowledge
Monthly Packet
Nature

Newspapers

Graphic
Illustrated London News
Pall Mall Gazette
St James's Gazette
Standard
The Times

Parliamentary Papers

1867 Report on the Royal Commission on the Employment of
Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1868-9 XIII

