T.H.S. Escott: A Tory Radical's View of Victorian Society

Arthur Walter Lysiak

Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Part of the History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/2307

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1968 Arthur Walter Lysiak
T.H.S. ESCOTT: A TORY RADICAL'S VIEW OF VICTORIAN SOCIETY

by

Arthur Walter Lysiak

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

June

1968
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>p.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1. T.H.S. Escott</td>
<td>p.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2. Escott's View of Society in the 1880's</td>
<td>p.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3. Escott's View of Society in the 1890's</td>
<td>p.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>p.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>p.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

We have made for ourselves strange gods, and we live in a state of transition to a yet unknown order. The precise functions of the new philosophy, science, theology and art, are as loosely defined as the exact provinces of the three estates of the realm, or the future relations of the different component parts of society. We hold enlarged conceptions of our place in the scale of the peoples of the earth, but what England's mission is we have not quite decided. We are in process of making up our minds what respect or attention, in fixing the destinies of a great nation is due to the popular will, what obeisance to the Sovereign, what confidence to the Sovereign's advisers. We are in perplexity as to the course we should steer between the democratic and the monarchical principles. It is a moot point whether the governed or the governors should be the judges of the plan of government that is adopted...The respective rights of employer and employed, capital and industry are an unsolved problem.1

The man who wrote these words in 1879, T.H.S. Escott, was deeply concerned about the future of England, since he realized that the social structure of England was being subjected to severe strains due mainly to the rise to power of the working classes. It was important, therefore, that the middle classes (to which he belonged) and the upper classes (with which he was closely associated) should study the problems of the working classes in order that these lower orders might be guided along constructive paths.

The very fact that the working classes were, for the first time in history, rising to power, held an element of danger to the existence of the classes above them, since, "it might be found that the natural sequel of a policy of sensation and impulse was the outburst of something very like revolutionary discontent."\(^2\) This threat of violent revolution was always a factor which Escott took into account; but it was also a challenge which he felt had to be met, since the upper classes still had a useful and important role to play in the destinies of England.

Although Escott was associated for a time with the Radicals and proposed the reforms outlined in the Radical Programme, he was at heart a conservative. This is shown through his writings which are imbued with the ideas of Walter Bagehot, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, and especially Benjamin Disraeli. Escott felt, as did most of these writers, that any solution to England's problems which was not securely founded on the rock of English tradition was dangerous and basically unworkable.

Escott's writings from 1879 to 1902 (the period covered by this paper) show a keen awareness of these problems as well as his attempts to find a solution. This paper will attempt to show, through a close examination of his writings, how Escott viewed the class structure of England, the sources from which he received many of his ideas, and the extent to which he was influenced by these ideas.
CHAPTER I

T.H.S. ESCOTT

The study of Escott's life is the study of a career which rose to great heights in the journalistic world of late Victorian England, but which fell into permanent decline at the age of forty-two for reasons which are still not completely known. J.L. Garvin, an eminent editor who knew journalistic talent when he saw it, spoke of Escott as "gifted" and "successful." To the *Times* of London, Escott was one of the most successful journalists of the age, as well as a very active behind the scenes political figure. For a short time in the early 1880's, Escott seemed to be almost everywhere at once: editing one of the great periodicals of the day, helping Joseph Chamberlain write the Radical Programme, advising Sir Charles Dilke on Radical tactics, consulting with the fiery young Tory, Lord Randolph Churchill, writing slashing political articles, and discussing the education of the workers with Matthew Arnold. Escott was not too busy, however, to amass a small fortune for himself, before being forced into retirement by his personal tragedy.

---


4 *The Times*, June 17, 1924.
Thomas Hay Sweet Escott was born on April 26, 1844, at Taunton, Somersetshire, the son of the Reverend Hay Sweet-Escott. Hay Sweet-Escott, an ordained minister of the Church of England, was rector of Kilve and a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford. After attending Somersetshire College, Thomas Escott entered Queen's College where he graduated with second class honors in Litteris Humanioribus in 1865. He combined a career as professor of classical literature in King's College, London, with his work as a journalist from 1865 to 1873. After 1873, he broke his connection with academic work and devoted all of his time to the more exciting and lucrative profession of journalism.5

He became a leading article writer for The Standard in 1866 turning the paper from a very reactionary position to a more liberal point of view, while raising its circulation rapidly; a feat which he performed for the next few years for a number of other papers including The World. He was also contributing heavily to many of the chief periodicals, anonymously for the most part. 6

In 1882, Escott, thanks to the influence of Anthony Trollope, an old school friend of his father's at Oxford, became editor of one of the most influential periodicals of the day, The Fortnightly Review. The periodical established in 1865, had risen to its fame mainly through the talents of the Radical journalist, John Morley, who resigned the editorship in 1882 so that he might work more closely with the Radicals in Parliament.

Escott was at the peak of his journalistic career in the early 1880's, although he was not without his detractors. W.T. Stead, at the time editor of the sensationalist Pall Mall Gazette, wrote years later of Escott, that he was, "a man of smartness and industry unencumbered with the philosophical convictions of his predecessors." On the whole, Stead felt that Escott's editorship of The Fortnightly Review was less than a success. More weight should be given the opinion of J.L. Garvin who, writing in the 1930's, stated that Escott maintained for some years a very high standard for The Fortnightly Review.

8 W.T. Stead, editor, Index to the Periodical Literature of the World, 1892, p.117.
9 Garvin, p.545.
It was also at this period of his life, from 1882 to 1886, that Escott was most closely involved in Radical politics, often using his position on the newspapers and periodicals to advance Radical measures. Escott's closest association was with Joseph Chamberlain, the leader of the Radical movement. Much of the Radical Programme was written, according to Chamberlain's biographer, by Escott himself.

The Radical Programme was one of the best briefs for a fighting party that was ever compiled. The plan was Chamberlain's own idea; with him all the articles in detail were concerted, he supervised every one of the articles in proof before publication...The first three sections -- Introduction, Machinery, Measures -- were written by Escott himself...while the final paper on local government, was as to the British part, by Escott... 

The Radical Programme itself was published serially in The Fortnightly Review in 1883.

While working in politics and journalism, Escott appears to have neglected his classical work, since after he edited The Satires of Juvenal and Persius in 1866 and The Comedies of Plautus in 1867, he never published any more classical studies. Most of his books after 1867, dealt with English social and political affairs. 

---

10 Garvin, p. 545
At a crucial date in English history, 1886, when Joseph Chamberlain split with Gladstone over Home Rule, Escott's health broke down completely. Although no specific cause is given for this, there is reason to believe that he suffered a nervous breakdown due to his intense, almost frantic overwork. The *Times of London* later referred to the stopping of his "brain work," and stated that he never fully recovered his health.\(^{12}\) From 1886 to 1894, Escott wrote no new books or articles. In 1894, he began to write a few articles and eventually wrote several books on English affairs, but apparently he was never actively engaged in politics as closely as he had been. He never again became editor of any publication, nor is there any record of his working for any newspaper after 1886.

There is reason to believe, however, from his remarks in his later books, that Escott continued a close association with many politicians, especially Sir Charles Dilke, another Radical, and it is obvious that he displayed a keen interest in English affairs. He continued writing and commenting upon the political events of the day until the last years of his life. He died in Brighton on June 14, 1924.\(^{13}\)

---
\(^{12}\) *The Times*, June 17, 1924.
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
The Times in its obituary notice of him referred to Escott as the last link with Victorian journalism, characterizing him as bright, genial, and brimming over with brilliant conversation. It also pointed out that he became one of the richest journalists of the day. In his book, Society in London, published anonymously in 1885, Escott had given a short description of himself.

Mr. Escott, who though I suppose he must give some attention to his professional pursuits, and has the credit of understanding them, never alludes to them in conversation and when talking is not easily enticed into an expression about them or any other matter. This may be wise, but life is short, and on the occasion on which I have met him, it has not seemed to me to be worth while to induce him to break his not too courteous repose.  

Escott was not without his own subtle sense of humour.

---

The Times, June 17, 1924.

CHAPTER II

ESCOTT'S VIEW OF SOCIETY IN THE 1880's

Escott's first important writing on the social and political affairs of England came in 1879 with the publication of England: Its People, Polity and Pursuits. The Times of London was generally favorable in its review, although the reviewer corrected Escott on several minor errors. The Economist, in its review of the book, when it was republished in 1885, commented that, "the tone and spirit of the book, too, are eminently English. He is conservative, without being reactionary, liberal, yet not subversive." Other reviews, such as those of The Saturday Review and The Spectator were also moderately favorable to Escott's first non-classical work. They appeared particularly impressed with Escott's attention to detail as well as the wide sweep of his work, although they tended to criticize isolated chapters such as those on philosophy or literature.

17 The Times, Jan 5, 1880.
18 The Economist, Jan 31, 1885, pp.194-5.
19 Allibone's Critical Dictionary.
This work was Escott's greatest success. The modern English historian, Asa Briggs refers to this book as, "by far the best," on the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was translated into several languages, adopted as a text book in the higher grade schools of Germany and other countries, and ran into a number of editions. Of lesser importance in determining Escott's ideas of English society is Society in London published anonymously in 1886, which consists of a series of short essays on the upper classes and some of the more important politicians of the day. It is possible that Escott who contributed this sort of material to various periodicals, also anonymously, felt that it would be worthwhile to republish them in the form of a book.

In his England, Escott appears to betray a vague feeling of horror at the thought of a rising of the lower classes.

There is hardly a city in the realm which, if they were resolutely determined to do, they could not turn into a state of siege. A well concerted rising on their part in any of the great centers of manufacture and commerce would not merely terrorize a district, but paralyze the trading system of the world. 21

In another passage he states that: "There are many persons living who can well recollect the ominous spectacle visible from Nottingham Castle of nineteen ricks simultaneously in flames."22 This fear of the unleashed passions of the working classes is not too different from that felt by other writers of the era. Just a few years earlier, Walter Bagehot was writing in The English Constitution of the necessity for stable government. This was something which no barbarous or semi-civilized nation had ever possessed. If, Bagehot writes, the mass of uneducated men in England were to be told now to go and choose their own rulers, they would go wild. Their imaginations would see dangers at every point and the election would end in disaster and tyranny for England.23

Matthew Arnold put this even more bluntly when he wrote of the vast portion of the working classes, which was finally issuing from its poverty and squalor, raw and half developed, to assert the "Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes." To Arnold, they are a source of danger and anarchy.24

22 Ibid., p.165.
This fear of the working classes has always been present in the minds of some of the English intellectuals, but recent developments had made this question even more vital. Bagehot thought that 1872 was yet too soon to attempt to understand the effects of the Reform Act of 1867. The workers who received the vote under that act did not realize the significance of their new power. One election so far from teaching the upper classes how the voters would use their power, was not even enough to explain to the workers that they held such power.25

There is a sense of urgency in Escott's writing commenting upon the same theme. A real and present danger exists in England, he tells the reader, since the ultimate political power of the nation now rests in the hands of a vast multitude of uneducated workers. 26

But besides this fear which Escott shares with Arnold and Bagehot, Escott also feels a deep concern and sympathy for the workers.

George Smith, of Coalvill, has said of himself that at the age of nine, he was employed in continually carrying about 40 pounds of clay upon his head...This work had to be performed, almost without a break, for thirteen hours daily. One night after his customary day's work, he was compelled to carry 1,200 nine inch bricks from the maker to the floors on which they harden, and for this labor he received sixpence.27

25 Bagehot,p.10.
26 Pillars of the Empire,p.xxxl.
This is a sympathy which is vehemently shared with Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle believed that never in recorded history had the lot of the workers been as badly off at it was in industrial England. Life, writes Carlyle, has become worse than death to many of the workers, who gain nothing by their work but misery. Believing this rather exaggerated picture of the worker's hardships, it is no wonder that Carlyle darkly predicts violence and revolution. But Escott, while not agreeing with the totally dark picture presented by Carlyle, feels that some of the misery of the worker is the worker's own fault, since the worker's greatest enemy is his own love for drink.

Escott tells the story of the laborer, who having saved some money, left for four days and spent it on drink. He walked back to work, several miles from home, but on taking off his coat, discovered a forgotten sixpence. He immediately put on his coat and walked back the several miles, where he drank his money's worth before resuming work. In discussing the working class areas of Liverpool and Manchester, Escott comments on the excessive number of public houses which are to be found throughout the area.

29 England (1880), p. 188.
Twenty years ago the habit of drinking during business hours was comparatively unknown at Liverpool; today it is so common as scarcely to attract attention, and certainly not to carry with it an adequate degree of stigma. 30

Escott places much of the blame for the wretchedness of the working classes on their passion for drink. To him the idea that drink leads to crime, and that it is an important cause of pauperism is so obvious as to be beyond need of proof. He quotes Redgrave, a factory inspector, in a report of October 1877, saying of the working classes that:

...the offspring are reared with the bottle and drugged by the mother. No doubt factory physique is not good, but it is made worse by factory association of vice and iniquity. 31

This is not only a moral problem; it is also an economic problem. This is implied in Escott's remark that if half the money that was spent upon drink were spent to provide the comforts of life, a great impetus would be given to trade. 32 Escott's interest in the drinking habits of the working classes tends to suggest his association with the non-conformist reformers, who felt that political and economic reforms must go hand in hand with a solution of the drinking problem.

30 Ibid.,p.95.
31 Ibid.,p.159.
32 Ibid.,p.128.
Escott's background, which is Anglican, seems to rule him out as a dissenter, but his later association with Joseph Chamberlain reveals his connection, at least for a time, with a phase of the movement. Certainly all observers recognized that drunkeness was a major factor accounting for the misery of the workers, as well as being an argument used to prevent the further extension of benefits to the workers. There is, however, another cause which is equally important.

In all grades of life, one meets with people who from their infancy upwards, are impotent to help themselves. They are morally invertebrate—without energy, without spirit, without ambition...It is the baleful inheritance of generations, and is perpetuated from father to son. These are the drones of the hive. 33

Escott seems to be saying that part of the working classes is beyond any real help; this is the class of congenital beggars and paupers who are always making demands upon society. Two of the prime factors in perpetuating this caste are the Poor Laws and the Work House.

At the present moment the possibility of relief from the rates and especially out-door relief, enters as much into the calculation of thousands of English laborers who are about to marry, or for the matter of that, about to get drunk, as would the possession of a series of good investments in railways stock to the professional man who was making future arrangements. 34

33 Ibid., p. 204.
Escott is convinced that to this part of the working classes, the poor-rates act as an inducement to illicit sex and to an early and improvident marriage. The grasping spirit of this part of the working classes is illustrated in the story of the audacious tramp who finding himself in a casual ward, at once insisted upon having a bath. When he was refused, he answered in the following manner.

Refer to Consolidated Order So-and-So, and you will see I must have my hot water bath. Give me your name please; I shall write to the Local Government Board.

Most of the English intellectuals admitted the existence of this rather hopeless part of the working classes, and were usually ready to bar them from any share in the managing of national political affairs. The question of just what part of the working classes deserved to be enfranchised was an important one to men such as Bagehot. It had once been held that there existed a class of intelligent artisans who could form sound opinions on national matters; it was to give men such as these the vote that elaborate schemes of electoral enfranchisement had been framed. But, Bagehot points out, the Reform Act of 1867 had enfranchised unskilled labor along with skilled labor, thus presenting the vote to a class which needed guidance even more than the others.

_Ibid._, p. 188.
Bagehot thought that the important question was, "Will they submit to it, will they defer in the same way to wealth and rank?" Escott in answering this question takes pains to point out that even the bottom order of the working classes possesses at least one virtue; a habit of obedience to the government. He attempts to prove this point by describing a worker he met walking through Hyde Park, who praised the republic and condemned the monarchy. But, asks Escott, where was he a few hours earlier? This terrible republican, Escott assures the reader, was wildly cheering the Queen along with the rest of her loyal subjects. This is typical of the attitude of most so called democrats and republicans in England. Escott thinks it a factor of incalculable importance that almost all working men, however much they may grumble, possess this basic loyalty to the monarchy.

It is this belief in the loyalty of the working classes to the monarchy and the upper classes which accounts for the confidence with which Escott anticipates the coming to power of the workers, and with which he states his faith in the good sense, the good feeling, and, most important, what he calls "the political docility of the English working man."

---
36 Bagehot, p.15
38 Ibid., p.142.
Bagehot brought out the same point when he wrote that the mass of the English people yield a deference not to their rulers as such, but to what Bagehot called the theatrical show of society. "Courts and aristocracies have the great quality which rules the multitude." 39 The English government, headed by the crown is an intelligible government which can be understood by the masses.

Escott's ideas on the monarchy are little different. Everyone knows, he writes, that while in name a monarchy, the government of England is really a republic. It is the idea of monarchy rather than the ruler herself who dominates the English mind. "British loyalty is divided between a woman and an abstraction. The woman is the queen; the abstraction is the power she exercises." 40 Escott forsees a long reign of power for the institution of the monarchy, since he looks upon the English court as the most important social institution in England. The monarch is certain to always hold great power in England, as long as society and politics interact with each other. 41

39 Bagehot, p. 287.
41 Ibid., p. 353.
If the upper classes look out after the interests of the workers, there is no real need to fear revolution; if, on the other hand, the upper classes become heedless of the cries of the multitudes, then the threat of revolution may begin to arise. A more immediate danger than violent revolution in Escott's eyes, would be than any attempt to take active steps against the working classes will be the prelude to the union of these loosely coherent sections of the workers into one solid mass which will prove dangerous to the state. This parallels some of Bagehot's own writings on the subject, where he expresses his own fear at the political combination of the working classes. This could be done as the result of the raising and continual agitation of certain questions which were of great emotional or practical significance to the workers. If this occurred, the upper classes would be faced with a dangerous dilemma; should they give in to the worker's demands, or should they take the risks of facing and defying the workers?¹⁴²

This fear of the combination of the working men taking over the control of the state legally, was one which was shared by John Stuart Mill, who felt that rule by an ignorant majority might be as dangerous to human freedom as rule by any upper class or monarchy.

¹⁴² Bagehot, p.21.
To Mill, the growth of social egalitarianism and mass culture foreshadowed an oppressive uniformity of opinion and action. The people themselves could be the greatest enemy to human freedom. This would be a great disaster to Bagehot.

It must be remembered that a political combination of the lower class, as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude; that a permanent combination of them would make them (now that so many of them have the suffrage) supreme in the country; and that their supremacy in the state they now are, means the supremacy of ignorance over instruction and of numbers over knowledge. 43

This desire to restrict the franchise and to dole it out sparingly was based upon no selfish desire to oppress the workers, but was motivated by fear that these workers might be guilty of a far worse oppression than any practiced by their former rulers. Escott sees no immediate danger of any serious combination of the workers since:

There is much on which we may congratulate ourselves in the conceptions which the working man entertains of the functions of the state, and in a general way, of the position of the governors. 44

The same confidence is shown by Escott when he discusses the further extension of the franchise. He says that, "the influences which leaven the masses are not democratic, but aristocratic...that admiration for rank seems almost innate in the English breast." 45

43 Bagehot, p. 21.
A distinct safeguard for the social and political order is what Escott calls the interfusion of classes with a unity of upward aspiration, whereby the subordinate classes take their tone and color from the classes above them. This turns the English nation into a democracy with definitely aristocratic tendencies. The English classes instinctively look up to and imitate the classes above them. 46

Thomas Carlyle also felt that the workers had a natural need for deferring to their superiors, though he probably would have disagreed with Escott as to just who these superiors were. To Carlyel, man's entire nature centered around this need for gregariousness, this desire for leadership. Man will always obey a virtual aristocracy of the wise, the brave, and the better, no matter what the society may happen to be. This virtual aristocracy, says Carlyle, in turn develops into an actual aristocracy with its own laws and systems. 47

Still another reason for this feeling of confidence which Escott manifests in the power of the workers is the variety of opinion and ambition in these workers. This through the medium of free speech and opinion enables the workers to work out their anger and frustration through free associations such as the Eleusis Club with its traditionally radical platform.

46 Carlyle, p. 233.
The charter of this club demanded the following:

1. Universal adult suffrage.
2. Abolition of all hereditary privileges.
3. Complete separation of church and state.
4. Compulsory free and secular education.
5. Payment of M.P.'s.
6. Payment of election expenses from local taxation.

The Club took its stand upon the true principles of democracy and publicly declined in the printed declaration of the club's political faith to pledge its adherence to the existing constitution in Church and State.\textsuperscript{48}

Escott's comments upon this manifesto are revealing; it belongs to a source of unmixed good. This is a full flavored safety valve in which worker dissatisfaction either never advances beyond the negative stage, or, when it contains some justification, commands the action of the legislature. To say that Escott approves of the club is not to say that he approves of its aims. His explanation is that such propaganda as they must use may sound terrible, but it is really quite harmless. "Its promoters may speak daggers, but they use and desire to use none."\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.143.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p.143.
Another set of organizations which have had an ameliorating effect upon the working classes are the labor unions, which have been responsible for a real improvement in good feeling between labor and capital. The trade unions are only an application of the principle of association which is a part of human nature; they are also an improvement over the terroristic secret societies of the past, and they channel possibly destructive tendencies (especially class warfare) along more conservative lines.

Arnold is less enthusiastic about these worker organizations, referring to them as a great working class power, distinct from the other classes, which tries through sheer size alone to rule the nation. Quantity, not quality is their guide. Arnold ranks this part of the working classes with the Philistines, since it affirms a class instinct, not its best self. 50

Escott, however, views the workers as taking an admirable, practical, and temperate view of the functions of the state. Because the English upper classes have done well by the worker, the worker in England is the least socialistic in the world. The fact that the worker is satisfied with his conditions is proven by the knowledge that in all this time no petitions have been offered to Parliament asking for any interference with the conditions of adult labor. 51

50 Arnold p. 142.
Escott even questions whether there any longer exists a need for any further state interference, since, thanks to the upper classes, the factory legislation has reached, "a culminating point of efficiency and comprehensiveness beyond which in the present century it is not likely to advance." 52

Instead of the mechanical, Benthamite charity of the state, especially as shown in the Poor Law, there was to be substituted organized but private charity. It is Christian charity alone, which can ever hope to alleviate the condition of the unfortunates among the workers; both in terms of giving the upper classes a greater sense of responsibility, and in helping the lower classes to accept their lot in life.

While admitting that the Poor Law is useful as a means of keeping the lower orders away from actual starvation, and, therefore, preventing actual revolution, it is, he contends, inevitably an evil, since it is basically Socialistic. Regarding the controversy between outdoor and indoor relief, Escott takes a view held by many Victorians that while outdoor relief may now be necessary, "in process of time there does not seem any reason why, assuming that the remedial agencies of pauperism are properly developed, out door relief should not become a dead letter." 53

52 Ibid., p.147.
53 Ibid., p.214.
What he asks for is a rigid system of personal supervision in which the merits of every case are closely investigated. This in his opinion might make it possible to dispense with the workhouse test and would allow for a practical means of outdoor relief. The only true answer to poverty is the philanthropy of the upper classes and self help on the part of the working classes themselves. There is, of course, only one way in which the lower classes can learn to help themselves, and that is through education. This lack of education on the part of the workers is one of the keys to understanding the attitude of the intellectuals. Speaking of the workers, Bagehot says:

The average can only earn very scanty wages by coarse labour. They have no time to improve themselves, for they are laboring the whole day through; and their early education was so small that in most cases it is dubious whether, even if they had much time, they could use it to good purpose. 54

Escott recognized the same problem when he wrote that, "we have in England...a vast multitude of voters who are yet to be educated." 55 Matthew Arnold felt that a liberal system of education carried on by a school system modeled on the Prussian structure would give the masses the culture which would enable them to rule with justice and order.

54 Bagehot, p.15.
55 Pillars of the Empire, p.xxxi.
Almost all members of the upper classes agreed that a greater education would be necessary before the working classes would be fit to rule in England. Even Lowe who fought bitterly against the broadening provisions of the 1867 Reform Bill was forced to admit, after it was passed, that England must educate its new masters. The type of education, however, which was to be provided for the masses remained a subject of dispute.

To Escott, the Education Act of 1879 was revolutionary, since it struck at English freedom and heavily increased the rates for taxes. More importantly, the Education Act of 1870 was completely novel in its effects, unlike the Reform Act of 1867 which merely elaborated on a previous act. One of these effects was the attempt to cure the worker of his disregard for the economies of life which in turn was caused by his ignorance. This could, Escott agreed, be partially remedied by an intensive schooling, and in fact, Escott wanted to have the schools provide a completely practical education.

The teaching thus lacks too often any direct reference to the occupations in which the children will engage after they leave school; it is not, in other words, calculated to give them a greater interest in their work, and, therefore, to make them better workmen.56

Here Escott would disagree with Arnold, who saw education in a much broader sense; as a means of bringing sweetness and light to the lower classes. He also disagrees with Arnold's idea of an organized system of state inspection to rectify unsatisfactory teaching; Escott asking rhetorically, "does it follow that the cure is fresh legislation and more school inspection for England?" The meaning of the Education Act is plain to Escott.

The law insures to every subject of the United Kingdom a certain modicum of education; it does not guarantee that every boy who deserves such promotion, or who is capable of profiting by it shall rise, by a series of gradual ascents to the highest academic training; but supplemented as our education system is by private enterprise, it renders it exceedingly improbable that such a boy should not have the wished for chance.

It is likely that Escott is making the customary distinction between the different working classes; those who are willing and able to learn much abstract theory, and the great majority to whom school can be little except a preparation for trade. The political education of the masses, however, must depend upon the statesmen. "It is here, that the real danger arises, that the need for political sobriety is most apparent."

57 Ibid., p.290.
58 Ibid., p.297.
59 Pillars of the Empire, p.xxxl.
This fits in with what Walter Bagehot calls the third function of Parliament which is its teaching function. "The leading statesmen in a free country have great momentary power. They settle the conversation of man-kind."\textsuperscript{60} But until some real education was granted the masses, most intellectuals would agree with Disraeli's character who said to Coningsby:

I for one have no faith in the remedial qualities of a government carried on by a neglected democracy, who for three centuries, have received no education. What prospect does it offer us of those high principles of conduct with which we have fed our imagination and strengthened our will?\textsuperscript{61}

Escott asks whether the middle classes will recognize their duty to provide a free education for all of the children of England? He hints at the problems which will trouble England for many years in the future; whether the compromise between public secular and private denominational schools will last? This is a question which the Radicals under Joseph Chamberlain will soon raise. Although he feels that religious and secular education should not be mixed, Escott, nevertheless, sees religious feelings as a sure guide to morality.

\textsuperscript{60} Bagehot, p.18

Can you bring up children so as to make them truthful, moral, law-abiding, good subjects of a state and good members of a family without teaching them that there is a God who judges mankind? 62

Escott answers his own question in the negative.

While admitting that atheistical doctrines, especially those of the positivists, hold a great charm and may be embraced by those of a strong character, he dismisses their importance to the masses by declaring them to have no practical force. The opinions of John Morley and Harriet Martineau ignore the categorical imperative of supernatural hopes and fears which is essential to the masses. An institution such as the Church of England, is useful in its everyday activities, especially in the country districts. He points out that the English people are not all anxious to dispense with the organized assistance of a national clergy. 63 He seems to feel that religion is necessary for the same reason that the crown is necessary; not for any real supernatural power it represents, but because it is necessary for the stability of society.

Escott takes note of Matthew Arnold's position on the Church of England, in which Arnold states that the church should be a center of religious sweetness, light and culture against the attacks of political nonconformists.

63 Ibid., p. 21.
To Arnold, the Church is a national society for the diffusion of Goodness. Escott points out that the two essentials of the Church in attaining its end are Christianity and the Bible, and then, rather skeptically, asks in what sense Arnold can be said to accept any of them. Escott makes plain that he thinks that Arnold's conception of the Bible and Christianity, and consequently of the Church, are much too vague and broad to have any effect upon the masses.

Escott would agree much more readily with Disraeli who had one of his characters claim that man, by his very nature, is made to adore and obey. If man is no longer provided with something to worship outside of himself, he will be guided by his own passions and create his own divinities. Men such as these felt a great reference for the institutions of the past; they also felt it impossible to rule without the use of institutions of some sort. The masses needed something more tangible and traditional.

There has been attempt to reconstruct society on a basis of material motives and calculations. It has failed. It must ultimately have failed under any circumstances; its failure in an ancient and densely populated kingdom was inevitable...Even Mormon counts more votaries than Bentham.

64 Ibid., p.459.
65 Disraeli, p.222.
66 Ibid., p.222.
It is not the pragmatic attitude alone which accounts for Escott's respect for old English institutions; it is also a deep need for a stable element to which he can cling in these days of change and turmoil when nothing seems secure. In politics, he sees the aristocracy as providing the stable base on which England can build its new industrial society.

The aristocratic principle in politics may be viewed in process of transmission, and in this way there is a guarantee afforded that a considerable portion of the most important administrative work of the nation will be in the hands of men who have the ear of that section of the community which is often used as a synonym for good society.67

The condition of the working classes is intrinsically bound up with the faith of the upper classes, since they must provide the leadership which will guide the workers. In English society in the present time, Escott sees three rival elements; the aristocratic, the democratic, and the plutocratic, all closely blended.

The aristocratic principle is still paramount, forms the foundation of our social structure, and has been strengthened and extended in its operation by the plutocratic, while the democratic instinct of the race has all the opportunities of assertion and gratification which it can find in a career conditionally open to talents.68

68 Ibid., p. 310.
The interfusion between the aristocracy and the new wealth of the middle classes is one of the most important governing principles of the day;

The process that has been going on is one of leveling up. The increase of the wealth of the middle classes, and their intermarriage with their social superiors, have caused them to assimilate the tastes and prejudices of their new connections...the holders of property naturally take the color of their view from those who are above them.69

Bagehot although less optimistic about the future of the aristocracy, says much the same thing about this leveling up attitude.

They (the aristocracy) ought to be the heads of the plutocracy. In all countries, new wealth is ready to worship old wealth, if old wealth will only let it, and I need not say that in England new wealth is eager in its worship...The possessors of the material distinctions...rise to worship those who possess the immaterial distinctions. Nothing can be more politically useful than such homage, if it is skillfully used; no folly idler than to repel it. 70

But Escott feels that this is being done by the aristocracy. He believes that the tendency in England today is for the plutocracy to assume more and more of an aristocratic complexion, while the aristocracy is being perpetually recruited from men who have moved to that position by acquiring money through commerce and trade.

69 Ibid., p.328.
70 Bagehot, pp.26-7.
The typical country gentlemen still sit in the House of Commons, but their interest is no longer in conflict with the interest of the urban members of the House. The territorial nobles, the squires, the country landlords and other rural gentlemen have in many cases become involved in commerce, while the merchants of the city have themselves become country gentlemen. The reason for this latter development are obvious to Escott, since, "The possession of land is the guarantee of respectability, and the love of respectability and land is inveterate in our race."71

The social position of England is formed by a blending of the plutocratic and aristocratic elements, usually in marriage. If this blending is not completely realized in one generation, it will come closer to perfection in the next, until the ideal is reached.72 There are two important reasons why this union between the aristocracy and the upper middle classes took place. One was the Reform Bill of 1832 which warned the aristocracy that it could no longer rely on the advantages of birth alone, but must now come forth with a greater effort. This gave a great impetus to the aristocracy to either enter new fields or to re-enter old areas with greater energy. This new energy is continuing to assert itself in an infinite number of ways in England.73

72 Ibid., p.311.
73 Ibid., p.318.
The second reason is the tradition of primogeniture in England which is the basis of the aristocracy. It is also one of the guarantees of the union between the upper and middle classes which has helped give England the domestic stability not found elsewhere.

Not all of the aristocracy is capable of governing, however, since Escott regards the Whig elements as representing a reactionary and dangerous party. These are men who, though born into high position, are incapable of realizing the dangers through which England is passing and do not give serious thought to the answers which must be found. Escott's ideas of the Whigs are little different from those of Disraeli's character, Coningsby, who saw them as attempting to establish a high, aristocratic republic of the Venetian sort in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Coningsby goes on to say, "The Whigs are worn out...Conservatism is a sham and Radicalism is a polution." Escott's view of contemporary politics are colored by this view of history, which looks upon the story of England as a conflict between Monarch, Church, and People against the oligarchic rule of the Whigs.

---

74 Disraeli, p. 244.
75 Ibid., p. 245.
The most important reason for Escott's long antipathy to Gladstone is because of his, "social sympathy being in the main with the opulent and cultured Whigs." 76 Gladstone is a man who has been built up by the penny press and has little in common with a real statesman; it is also apparent that Escott has a personal dislike for 'the people's William,' when he accuses Gladstone of being morally intoxicated as well as having an excessive idea of his own infallibility. 77 This is mainly the fault of his followers who have looked up to him as a sort of idol who can do no wrong. The results of this adulation are evident in the man's personality and character. Escott refers to Gladstone's followers as, "a petty contingent of satellites, sycophants, and toad eaters, who are picked up from the pavement." 78 Worst of all, the Whigs are using Gladstone, who is really one of them in spirit, to prevent any meaningful reform.

With the Liberal party under the control of the Whigs, there is little comfort to be found with the Conservatives, whose only aim appears to be a desire to castigate their opponents for remaining in office while they themselves fear to take their place in office. The death of Beaconsfield has robbed them of their courage and convictions. 79

77 Ibid., p. 169.
78 Ibid., p. 163.
79 Ibid., p. 223.
Disraeli is Escott's idea of the greatest English statesman of the day. To Escott, Disraeli was a man of commanding genius, who became a Conservative by the accident that he was the cleverest man the Conservatives could find. At heart, Disraeli was no true Conservative. May not, Escott asks sarcastically, mediocrity suit them better than genius.

Of the then leader of the Conservative party, Lord Salisbury, Escott has little good to say. He fears, in fact, that under the leadership of Lord Salisbury, the once highly successful Conservative party will fall to defeat. Lord Salisbury possesses two major faults; he was an enemy to Disraeli, and he vies with Gladstone in pandering to the mob.

Lord Randolph Churchill was yet an unknown quantity, since he has yet to prove himself in office. As Escott put it: he can bowl, but can he bat. Escott also suspects him of possessing few real principles. Although possessed of real potential, it is too early to tell which way he will turn.

---

80 Ibid., p.289.
81 Ibid., p.233.
There is little leadership to be found in the person of the monarch. Although Escott publicly pays great respect to the Queen's name in his public writings, and sincerely does have great respect for the institution, his anonymous writings shower her with a mild sort of ridicule.

Queen Victoria has not only the true German love for pageant and ceremonies of state, uniform trappings, shows and functions of all kinds, but the passion distinctive of the English proletarian for funerals and whatever is associated with the Sepulcher. It is morbid, but what have you?82

The Queen, although a kindly person, has the capriciousness of her sex. Obviously no real leadership can be found here.

With Disraeli dead, Gladstone in the hands of the Whigs, and the Monarch unable to take control of the situation, Escott would seem to have only the Radicals under Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. In Escott's opinion, Chamberlain is a man modeled very much after the style of William Pitt, the elder. The Radical is prompt, resourceful, courageous, and a first rate man of business. 83 Dilke is characterized as a man possessing the sanity of judgment and strength of will necessary for political life. Perhaps even more interesting is the teasing to which Escott subjects his friend Sir Charles Dilke.

---

82 Ibid., p.35.
83 Ibid., p.212.
It often happens that when a man has been severely defeated in a love affair, jilted by his betrothed, or duped by the mistress for whom he swore, he had a grand passion, he has sworn he would for the future have nothing more to say to women. It is a rash vow. The inevitable hour arrives, the destined lady arrives, and the misogynist yields...abstention from diplomacy is, therefore, just as much out of the question to that austere ermite of Radicalism, Sir Charles Dilke, as isolation from feminine society is to the man who, living in the midst of his fellow creatures cannot subdue the cravings of the old Adam.84

Escott is allegedly commenting upon Dilke's disappointment in Diplomacy, but one wonders if Escott knew something of Dilke's private affairs, since this was written in the year 1885.

This analysis of Escott's view of the politicians in England in the 1880's is important because the political education of the workers must depend upon the statesmen, or else, Escott believed, a revolutionary situation could easily develop. The workers will give their allegiance to the present system only if, "they are dealt with in a suitable manner and by rulers whom they instinctively trust."85

84 Ibid., pp.67-8.
It is true that England is a nation in which the workers and peasants have been trained to defer to the upper classes and where the lower classes have always trusted in the faith and judgment of the higher orders. But Escott feels that this all important asset which the governing classes possess is in danger of being wasted. He is especially critical of the upper classes in the counties for neglecting their responsibilities to those below them. Escott's complaint is not that the Marquis, Duke, or Earl, who is the true ruler of the county, is a tyrant or an amiable despot, but that this great magnate is sometimes not managing his affairs at all; he is an absentee landlord all too often. With this being the case, the little lords all tend to follow his example, neglecting their own duties. This neglect is particularly evil, since in most cases titular power and governmental power go hand in hand. Unless these natural leaders of the counties reassert their power and once again exercise vigorous leadership over the people of their areas, the people may begin to look for leadership elsewhere. Just as the great lords tend to be great figures (such as Lord Lieutenant), the minor territorial rulers (such as the untitled squires), tend to be the magistrates, therefore possessing ex officio powers, often as members of the local board of guardians.

86 Ibid., p.345.
87 Ibid., p.47.
Their powers for good and evil are practically unlimited, but depend upon constant work and effort; something Escott feels may sometimes be lacking.

At the heart of this social system sits the squire, who is described as kind and good to his tenants, although, "he has never been guilty of the indiscriminate bounty which is the parent of pauperism." This squire gives money to the poor in a very philanthropic manner. His bailiff, Escott assures the reader, is, "a respectable gentleman who has no social ambition of an aggressive character." There is a trace of irony in Escott's description of what he calls the ideal of English life.

The normal and ideal state of things in a country parish is one under which there is absolute unanimity between the action and the will of representatives of the spiritual and temporal powers—that is between the parson and the squire—and where the inhabitants acquiesce in the decision and policy of these as in the dispensation of a beneficent wisdom.

Yet for all of Escott's irony at the expense of the Tory Squire, Escott still feels that this English village is a microcosm not only of the English nation, but of the English constitution. When this ideal is altered, it is not the system, but clumsiness or error in its administration which is to blame.

---

88 Ibid., p.10.
89 Ibid., p.10.
90 Ibid., p.8.
Although recent legislation had modified this relationship to some extent, its basic structure still stands. Escott, however, seems to wonder as to whether or not this structure is in danger. The Old Tory Squire, for all of his faults, at least exercised effective authority; the present country squire is sometimes lacking in leadership. And this at a time of upheaval and class conflict, when strong leadership is most required.

Great changes have been made in England, not the least of which was in the industrialization of the country. But with this new industry has come a new nightmare; the depression.

We have spoken of the excited prosperity of the years 1872-1874...since that period...we had a still more protracted era of depression. The causes of it have also been numerous and various.91

Fortunately, this depression is not a permanent crisis. In writing of England, Escott says:

What threatens to wrest the reins from her hands is not so much competition, or the want of reciprocity, as the practice of adulteration, and the high price of English labor as compared with foreign.92

Certainly during these days of change and crisis, men are needed who both can and will exercise authority. Escott seems to have some doubts as to whether the present leadership still fits this definition.

---

91 Ibid., p.123.
92 Ibid., p.124.
It was perhaps this combination of fears and anger at the thought of the neglect of their duties, which impelled him to lash out at the upper classes.

The great fact in the political situation in England is that the party machinery, which underlay political life has hopelessly broken down. Its machinery is exhausted or out of repair. What was once a whole is split up into factions and sects, which reduce each other to paralysis and impotence. There is only one progressive principle at work... It is Radicalism; it is the revolutionizing spirit.93

The aims of this radical and revolutionizing spirit are most clearly outlined in the Radical Programme which Escott helped write. They are:

1. Free Primary Education.
2. Land Reform.
4. The Consolidation of Local Government.
5. The Creation of Nation Councils for Scotch and Irish Affairs.
6. Disestablishment.
7. Manhood Suffrage.
8. Payment of M.P.'s.

Land Reform has as its purpose the multiplication of land ownership—a distinctly conservative principle as Escott correctly observes. He also calls for the restitution of common land which had been illegally appropriated centuries ago. The project for land reform is at its most radical in calling for the transfer of indirect taxation to direct taxes.

The more one studies this Radical manifest, the more one realizes that for all of its use of the terms Radical and revolutionizing, it contains no threat to the upper classes. On the contrary, it is a call to action for them to recognize their duties to the masses; to resume effective leadership of the workers.

And yet, for all of his association with Chamberlain and the Radicals, it seems doubtful if Escott could fully agree with the Radicals since:

The English idol is respectability and property is only a mode of respectability. In England no one is accounted respectable who has not got a balance at the banker.94

The Radicals are playing a dangerous game. Some observers think that they are led by unscrupulous leaders and are threatening the foundations of society. Their main danger is that they may end up making themselves both dis-reputable and ridiculous at the same time.

94 Ibid., p. 224.
Escott's attitude towards the Radicals, with whom he was working, is somewhat puzzling. Possibly, at the time he wrote this (1885), he was becoming disenchanted with their ideas.

The reader may be a little surprised at this point to find so little notice being taken of the great middle classes in England. Escott, himself has very little to say of them, but concentrates almost all of his attention upon the working classes and the upper classes. When he does write of the middle classes, he judges their professions by criterion which are communicated by the aristocracy.

The degree of esteem allotted to the different English professions are exactly what might be expected in a society organized upon such a basis and conscious of such aims. Roughly it may be said professions in England are valued according to their stability, their remunerativeness, their influence, and their recognition by the state. 95

The merchant is contrasted with the stockbroker, as the example of the man with a stable profession. The merchant's house of business is practically a public institution with a long and honorable tradition behind it. There is no risk taking in his profession, while a suspicion of precariousness attaches itself to the stockbroker. Also the manner in which the professional receives his money seems to be crucial in judging his social standing.

95 England (1880), p. 320.
Escott admits that all professional men receive their payment from the public, but he seems to think it very very distinctive that some of them receive their money through a middleman, while others receive their payment direct from their clients. Those who receive their payments indirectly, of course, have a greater social status than the rest. Thus the barrister has greater social standing than the solicitor, for just this reason.

The degree of influence which the professional holds over the public mind is equally important. None of the men in professions have the same power of appealing to the mind or the moral convictions which guide everyday life. In this respect the writer, the clergyman, or the statesman stand on a higher plane.\(^6\) The state judges the professions according to these same standards.

In assessing Escott's point of view at this time (1880) one will see that he is troubled by the depression he believes to have occurred in England, and most of all, by a failure in leadership on the part of the upper classes, especially after the death of Lord Beaconsfield. He is cautious and apprehensive, at times he is fearful of the future, but basically he is optimistic. It is true that a potential for a revolutionary situation exists, but Escott does not believe that this revolution will ever occur.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p.325.
In discussing the granting of household suffrage to the county voters, he admits that the entire aspect of party politics will be altered. Liberalism would be in a decided majority, and this majority would enable Liberal statements to be more daring. "There are those who hold that the latent revolutionary instincts of the English people would display themselves without disguise, and we should at once enter upon a new order of subversive legislative enterprise."\(^\text{97}\) Escott contends, however, that looking back on the facts written in this work elsewhere and bearing in mind that the social and political sides of Englishmen are not distinct, household suffrage in the counties would be no more revolutionary than the Reform Bill of 1832.

On a great national catastrophe such as the loss of a major war would lead to Revolution.

It is not possible to conceive of the English monarchy perishing except amid a universal cataclysm...It is only upon the fulfillment of such hypothesis as this and not as a consequence of any rational fit of political discontent, however deep or long, that the destruction of the monarchy can represent itself as a contingency that need be reckoned with. \(^\text{98}\)

\(^{97}\) Ibid., p.408.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., pp.409-10.
With all of its imperfections, the governing system has worked well for the masses and they realize it. What is true of education is true of labor, capital, pauperism, cooperation and other such matters.

The system is not complete, the different duties to be performed by its component parts are not yet decided, the connecting link between these different parts does not always exist. On the other hand, what was once a void is now filled by complex and more or less successful machinery.99

The devices of the industrial society have been used to aid the workers; ultimately it will give them a much more meaningful life which will make them worthy to govern England.

Something of what we have done in the case of our manufacturing industries we have done in the case of education. We have economized force. The great machine for the improvement of humanity has at last been fairly put in motion... the masses in this country have had the means of self-elevation afforded them, and we know that there is springing up around us a new generation which will not be like its predecessors. 100

The forces of the new society which filled men such as Matthew Arnold with deep forboding, produced confidence in the new generation for T.H.S. Escott.

99 Ibid., p.297.
100 Ibid., p.297.
CHAPTER III

ESCOTT'S VIEW OF SOCIETY IN THE 1890'S

The most important of Escott's writings in the 1890's is contained in his Social Transformations of the Victorian Age. The book is essentially a continuation of his England: Its People, Polity and Pursuits. Escott takes care to point out that:

The habits of national life and characters as well as national institutions at work have in all cases been made from general observations, supplemented by the assistance of the highest experts in their different departments to whom this writer had access. 102

---

102 Ibid., p. vi.
Of less importance in assessing Escott's thoughts are **Personal Forces of the Period**, which is a group of character studies of the eminent men of the time; **Randolph Churchill as a Product of His Age**, the life of the man, who in Escott's mind, carried on in the tradition of Disraeli; and **Gentlemen of the House of Commons**, which is a two volume history of that institution. Use was also made of a number of articles written by Escott which appeared in various periodicals.

Nearly twenty years after the first edition of his first survey of England, Escott has a consistently optimistic attitude towards the nation of his day. He sees that, "a new generation has sprung up which is demonstrably better educated and more humanized than any of its predecessors." This improvement, which he detects in the life of the working man is a constant theme throughout this later work.

---

103 T.H.S. Escott, *Personal Forces of the Period* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Limited, 1898), Hereinafter cited as **Personal Forces**.


106 *Social Transformations*, p.152.
His fear of the mob had abated considerably as is shown by his assertion that the people of London had become the best behaved and the least drunken. A key factor in his optimism was the return of prosperity, brought about by the increased foreign trade with the great trade markets of the world. This in turn brought about a great increase in employment, thus lowering much of the social tension inevitably produced by unemployment. 107 Scott firmly believes that increased foreign trade leads to economic prosperity and in turn to economic tranquility. He points out the connection between the age of protection when the price of food for the poor rose greatly and the riots and arson by which the suffering poor showed their anger and misery, which tends to prove that economic distress in England inevitably leads to class discontent. 108

This great prosperity of the late Victorian age has spread through all of the classes in England as is shown in the example of railways, which like other inventions, have materially benefitted all of the classes. This means that the present economic condition of England is sound and long lasting. 109

107 Ibid., p. 44.
108 Ibid., p. 44.
109 Ibid., p. 44.
But although much of this optimism does rest upon the basis of material gain, Escott views changes which are potentially even more important. The ruling powers must give an account of their stewardship to the people in this new democratic epoch. The influence of individuals counts for little today, since, "The influence of a democratic epoch has reduced to a uniformity of unheroic proportions those who represent in public places, the enterprise, the occupations, the achievement, or the society of the day."\textsuperscript{110}

But though the people now are the ultimate power in the land, it is still the upper classes who exercise real power. Escott is sure that in the practical details of life, the system by which the upper classes get their way is beyond any danger of organized attack.\textsuperscript{111} Fortunately, this power exercised by the upper classes has been used wisely.

The patrician landowners of England have recognized the opportunity of removing the remnant of the traditional estrangement between themselves and their countrymen.\textsuperscript{112}

One of the elements which have helped to remove this estrangement is the more generous policy shown to the poor and advocated by Escott in the 1880's.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., pp. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{111} Personal Forces, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{112} Social Transformations, p. 113.
The administrative methods of the new Councils have very generally shown a reaction from the more stringent and less sympathetic policy of the old Board of Guardians. Thus, the workhouse test, is far less often...the condition of poor relief.113

This sort of attitude, as well as acts such as the County Councils, has removed much of the traditional hostility between the classes which existed fifty years ago. In fact this class hostility seems to Escott to be so much a part of past history, that he advises those who would like to learn of it, to read Disraeli's Sybil, which is, "the most vivid and not the least trustworthy record."114 Sybil, as is shown by his frequent references to the book (as well as to other of the social novels of Disraeli), had an immense influence upon Escott. His view of the working classes is seen through the prism of Disraeli's novels. Perhaps the most famous passage in Sybil, and typical of the type of writing which influenced Escott, is the description of the infant miners of England.

They endure that punishment which philosophical philanthropy has invented for the direst criminals and which those criminals deem more terrible than the death for which it is substituted. Hour after hour elapses, and all that reminds the infant trappers of the world they have quitted and that which they have joined, is the passage of the coalwagons.115

113 Ibid., p.189.
114 Ibid., p.113.
The plight of the adults is equally horrible.

The plain is covered with the swarming multitude; bands of stalwart men, broad-chested and muscular, wet with toil and black as the children of the tropics; troops of youth—alas! of both sexes—although neither their raiment nor their language indicates the difference; all are clad in male attire...Naked to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs between their legs clad in canvas trousers, while on hands and feet an English girl, for twelve, sometimes sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs of coals up subteranean roads, dark, precipitous and dismal.116

This was a thing of the past by the time Sybil was published in 1845, and certainly by the time Escott was writing in the 1890's, but the feeling of indignation at this exploitation of the poor was still warm in Escott.

Today even the poorest villagers, claims Escott, find it possible to live in a clean and sometimes comfortable fashion. The points of the Great Charter, the demand for which led to the wild rioting and bloodshed described in Sybil, have been quietly conceded by the upper classes. This is a key factor in the reconciliation of the classes. For example, in writing of the farmer's attitude after the Parish Council's Act of 1894, Escott states that while it is true that the farmer's attitude towards the squire and magistrate has lost something of its old deference, nonetheless, the basis of the social system is the same. The county councils, which are the expression of the fusion of the classes rather than the cause, have not brought about the Revolution and the Red Republic any more than any of the earlier Parliamentary Reforms have done so.

116 Ibid., p.161.
Escott takes pains to point out that most of these reforms were reversions to that past; that they all have some precedent in the tradition of England. In many respects they are revivals of the authority which the freeholders held in the old Manor Courts. Of another reform, he writes:

The Corporation Act of 1838 and the County Council Act of 1884 were the same. Both marked a return rather than a sudden introduction of a new measure.

This idea of the restoration of the ancient rights of the lower classes is found in Coningsby, where Disraeli has one of his characters remark:

The peasantry is as ancient, legal and recognized an order as the order of the nobility; that it had distinct rights and privileges, though for centuries they had been invaded and violated, and permitted to fall into desuetude.

Although Escott often talks of social fusion, he is not referring to any sort of classless idea of society. What he does mean is that the classes, should, while remaining distinct and separate, band more closely together in order to better fulfill their various duties; and the major duty of the upper classes is to lead the rest of England.

117 Ibid., p. 90.
118 Ibid., p. 93.
This is work which is being successfully attempted by people such as the sister of Joseph Chamberlain, though here Escott has a word of caution for those who would seek to guide the worker.

Above all let him never offer his hand to shake. He himself may think the manual overture will gratify the person to whom it is made showing that the maker has no false pride; a greater mistake there could not be as a well born academic socialist found out when, to demonstrate his faith in the equality of all men, he shook hands with his brother's footman. 120

Although socialism was a rising force at this period, Escott in 1897 does not feel any great danger from it. The only time the word socialist is mentioned in Social Transformations, it is used as a joke and the socialist is shown up as a ridiculous and ineffectual person. It is difficult to account for Escott's lack of interest in socialism. Perhaps the return of economic prosperity as well as his own faith in the workers lead him to believe that it is no longer a potent force. He may also have thought that the great mass of trade unionists were middle class in many of their aims and attitudes and did not desire class war. Certainly he seems to have been unaware of the militant new unionism of the 1890's. 121

120 Social Transformations, p.130.
121 Ibid., p.133.
Escott points with evident satisfaction to the fact that in spite of various reform measures, the offices of local government are still filled by the same gentry class as had filled them twenty years ago. These are the same classes, but these are different families now holding these positions; men with backgrounds as bakers, solicitors, and brewers. These great changes in the composition of the families holding these positions have come about because of the constantly increasing cost of modern life.

The successive bad years in English agriculture, the constant buying up of the estates of small country gentlemen by prosperous traders with a taste for rural life; the immense addition of late to the expense of a London season.122

Escott does not, however, woefully bemoan the coming of the new men, since basically they are no different from those whom they have replaced. In speaking of the Jewish financiers, for example, he says:

The Rothschilds themselves are only one of several Semitic families that have shown this characteristic facility in adapting themselves to the social condition fortune has given them, and in assimilating the prejudices and habits of the better-to-do classes of their adopted country. 123

122 Personal Forces, p.176.
123 Ibid., pp.177-8.
This is not because class consciousness is so weak, but because it is strong. The personnel of the class may change, but the distinctness of the class remains. The classes have been able to communicate to the new entries the tastes, pursuits, habits, and most important of all, the institutions upon which the idea of class rests. Although the methods by which men reach the upper classes may differ, the ideas of the class structure itself remains the same. This, to Escott, is one of the most important of the transformations which had taken place in England in the last century. The conventional distinctions between the aristocracies of birth and money, and of manufacture and land have disappeared.

It is in the English public schools that most of the fusion between the aristocracies of birth and money have taken place. Here the young plutocrat's son mixes with the son of the Duke and learns manners and bearing; eventually both begin to appreciate the better points of the other. This is the sort of relationship delineated by Disraeli; Young Coningsby, the aristocrat becoming close friends with Millbank the son of the manufacturer. The completeness of the union between the old aristocracy and the new, rising middle class, each bringing its own virtues and strengths into the union, accounts for much of the stability which Escott sees in his society.

The Jews (for whom Escott had great respect and admiration) are used as an example of this fusion. They have integrated well into upper English society. So long as the wealthy Jews send their sons to English universities and schools, they will not be looked upon as aliens or foreigners by the native English, or at the very least, their foreignness is not going to be very noticeable.125

This concentration of wealth and title is accepted and welcomed by all classes of the British public. England's aristocracy (which is both old and new) is composed of men who earn their way not through title alone, but through ability as well. The titled and untitled aristocracy of England has always represented ability and intelligence, asserts Escott, perhaps, even more than antiquity of descent. Not too different from the answer Disraeli's Coningsby received, when he asked where the natural aristocracy is to be found in England in the present day.

Among those men who a nation recognizes as the most eminent for virtue, talents, and property, and, if you please birth and standing in the land. They guide opinion; and therefore they govern. 127

125 Personal Forces,p.180.
126 Social Transformations,p.15.
127 Coningsby,p.158.
The old and true aristocracy of England may have merged with the rising plutocracy, but it also renews faith with the most important element in England today -- the Democracy.

If the civic association of the titled nobility with the new democracy of England were not popular, it could not exist. 128

Problems of great magnitude still exist in England, even with this fusion of classes, and now, more than ever, it is the responsibility of the upper classes to help solve them through parliamentary means. Escott recognizes that the advance of civilization creates new problems which must be rectified by new legislation. The state must interfere on behalf of the poor, until the resources of all classes are equalized. Not that the national wealth is to be divided equally between all classes, but that the workers must possess a greater share of that wealth than they now possess. In order to provide these various services for the people, the function of the legislature itself is now changing.

More and more the tendency is for the constitution to call into existence a government to undertake a specific task of legislation whose scope is defined by the individual possessing for the moment the national self confidence. 129

128 Social Transformations, p.11.
129 Ibid., p.247.
In discussing this changing role of Parliament, Escott enumerates the
two most important factors which have helped to bring this about. One is
the existence of the democratic electorate, for whose votes both parties
must bid; the other is the rising importance of the penny press which has
begun to perform the duty of educating and stimulating the country which had
once been done by Parliament. This has resulted in the diminuation of the
prestige of Parliament.

In studying Escott's attitudes towards the members of Parliament, one
becomes aware that by the 1890's he has drawn closer to the Tory Party.
Though it is possible that something which occurred in the years not covered
by this paper (1886 to 1894) may be responsible for this shift in attitude.
It is more likely that he may have felt that his real affinity was with the
progressive Conservatives who took a more organic and paternalistic view of
society than the Gladstone Liberals. The loss of Chamberlain as well as
Gladstone's concentration on the cause of Home Rule helped to take much of
the drive for reform away from the Liberals.

Of the men in Parliament themselves, Escott had strong and decided views.
The most important man in Parliament was Lord Salisbury. When writing of
Salisbury in the 1880's, Escott condemned him for his hatred of Disraeli and
for pandering to the masses.
Writing in 1898, Escott states that Salisbury in 1885 was:

full of practical sympathy with the need of the working classes. He supported legislation for increasing the opportunities of the masses to make their voices heard at General Elections by substituting voting papers for actual presence at the ballot boxes. He proposed and carried many improvements in the reformatory system. 130

But Salisbury while writing for The Standard (at the same time as Escott) came under the influence of Voltaire who influenced Salisbury's views of democracy to a considerable extent. Escott seems in 1898 to have forgotten his earlier views of Salisbury as a man who vied with the hated Gladstone for the cheers of the mob. Instead Escott now states that Lord Salisbury's attitude is characterized as follows:

Towards popular privileges, it is not, nor has it ever been that of a haughty noble animated by the distrust proper to his order. Rather has it been the temper of an intellectual and literary critic who exercises his right to test the value of popular traditions in politics before embodying them in his creed and who refuses to echo the cuckoo cries of party.131

Randolph Churchill exercised a great influence upon Salisbury by impressing upon him the importance of two great ideas. One was the evil wrought by the use of party titles and names which did not correspond any longer to present political realities.

130 Personal Forces, pp. 28-9.
131 Ibid., p. 29.
The other was the desirability of extending self government to every aspect of national life.\textsuperscript{132} This, of course, is Escott's own attitude. As early as 1885, Escott was writing that the moderate politicians of England, regardless of their parties and factions, must combine to provide safe and constructive leadership; if this were not done, the mob, under the leadership of demagogues and charlatans might endanger the social structure.

Escott sees the destruction of parties as being a guiding principle in Randolph Churchill's life; a principle which is close to fruition in Salisbury's coalition government. Salisbury, in Escott's eyes, had no great love for Parliamentary rule. He may, like J.A. Froude, "have inclined to the belief that the country and the empire have exhausted the blessings of Parliamentary and representative rule."\textsuperscript{133}

In answer to complaints that Conservative principles have been surrendered, Escott answers for Salisbury, that since the rule of the people of England has become supreme, these principles have been forgotten. This is the time of expediency and compromise, and if Salisbury and his friends use their power for the good of England, Escott can see no cause for complaint.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p.31.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p.31.
Though there is some evident sarcasm in that last remark, Escott makes it plain that Salisbury is the politician most able and most worthy to guide England today. Salisbury has inherited from Disraeli his, "faculty for exciting the personal interest of all classes in himself." Although criticized for lacking intellectual convictions in the guidance of the country, Escott defends Salisbury by reminding the reader that these are not needed in this country in political affairs. Something more loose and accommodating is necessary for the day to day workings of the state. Escott, like Walter Bagehot, values common sense and a certain understanding of human nature, as of more importance than any doctrine.

So too thought, in such spirit acted, Benjamin Disraeli. So thinks, so acts his erstwhile restive and complaining colleague, but now loyally disciplined follower.135

Thanks to Salisbury, and especially to Disraeli, the Conservatives are the popular party and have become, "the most elastic, eclectic, all embracing, all-enduring organization known in our public life."136

The second most powerful man in the country, though not fully a member of the Conservative party, was Joseph Chamberlain with whom Escott worked closely in the 1880's. Escott approves Chamberlain's resignation from the Liberal party, feeling that his evolution into a Conservative was inevitable.

134 Ibid., p.17.
135 Ibid., p.32.
136 Ibid., p.40.
He quotes approvingly a Tory characterization of Chamberlain.

In his social progress through life, he had heard young men talk and eventually recant much democratic flummery. Looking at Chamberlain, he saw at once the lack of any real sympathy between Radical Cobdenites, hard as Manchester paving-stones and this emotional, extremely impressionable dropper of a few ober dicta with a Republican flavour. 137

Besides, Escott points out that Chamberlain's Radicalism largely, "originated in the feelings the most alive to aristocracy of any." 138

Strangely enough, Escott feels that much of Chamberlain's Radicalism came from a youthful association with the son of the poet Thomas Hood.

Captivated by the boyish brilliance of his chosen friend, young Chamberlain caught the infection of his political malady as he might have caught the measles. 139

In discussing his one time associate, Sir Charles Dilke, Escott may surprise the reader in three ways. First Escott never alludes to the scandal itself. Secondly, he writes as though he still believed that Dilke had an important political future ahead of him. Third, he seems to assume the continuance of a close political partnership between Dilke and Chamberlain. Of course, feelings of delicacy and friendship may account for points one and two.

137 Ibid., p. 75
138 Ibid., p. 76.
139 Ibid., p. 76.
Gladstone is still regarded with a feeling of warm dislike. He never understood or appreciated the social fusion which has been taking place during his own lifetime nearly as well as had Disraeli. What Escott calls the new Conservatism, started by Disraeli and carried on by Lord Randolph Churchill, was much too cosmopolitan and novel to ever endear itself to Gladstone, who, according to Escott, was as old fashioned in social tastes as he was tenacious in his official views. Nevertheless, the final illness of Gladstone moved Escott to write of his fine personal qualities, culminating in a description of Gladstone as a great and good man. The reader may feel, however, that his eulogy of Gladstone was merely the customary tribute one pays a dead opponent; certainly one never finds any other reference to Gladstone as a great and good man. 140

The Whigs, most of whom had left the Liberal party, were blamed for the present weakness of the Liberals. If they had only shown social wisdom or combined sympathetic insight into human nature with prevision in politics, the Liberals would have had a greater chance for victory. 141 Towards Lord Rosebery, the present leader of the Liberal party, Escott has a feeling of mild contempt, writing that this young Lord lacked a most important ingredient in his character; discipline. Rosebery, though possessed of great gifts, is a pampered pet of fortune.

140 Ibid., p. 300.
141 Ibid., p. 40.
No help can be sought from the men around him, since, "his judgment of men has not been calculated to inspire unbounded confidence."\textsuperscript{142} Perhaps, Rosebery is simply in the wrong party.

Every form of social pressure during many years was brought upon him in the Conservative direction. The mission of the Turn in recent days is to convert languid Liberals to the realities, if not the name, of Conservatism.\textsuperscript{143}

According to Escott, all that prevented him from joining the Conservative party was a streak of vanity which runs very deep in his nature.

As Escott prophesied in the 1880's, the monarchy has continued to grow in influence and power. The Queen, although too old to be able to rule effectively, is loved and honored. The future king, the present Prince of Wales, is described as the best of English politicians in foreign affairs, and in the active exercise of the art, one of the best diplomats in the world. Escott's praise of the Prince seems rather extreme, however, in describing him as:

not only the first gentleman in England, but to a great extent the head of every department of our complex social polity.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 60.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p. 14.
Whether Escott writes about the very apex of English society, or whether the common working man is the object of his attention, the reader is aware of the confidence with which Escott views the present and the past. World trade is sound and economic prosperity has returned to England; Disraeli and Salisbury have led the workers under the standard of the Conservative party and class conflict is a nightmare of the past. Most important of all, the English worker is showing himself fit to rule England.

The Labour representatives, by their exemplary course and bearing, have disarmed frightened hostility, proved an accession to the debating and deliberative strength of the Assembly; in the case of Mr Burt and Mr Broadhurst they have proved successful administrators.145

The experiment in democracy which Escott has watched so carefully, at times fearfully, is proving successful; Escott will eventually live to see the almost complete enfranchisement of England by 1924, though one may wonder whether Escott's optimism would survive the strains.

145 Gentlemen of the House of Commons, p. 328.
CONCLUSION

T.H.S. Escott, cultured, well read, and highly educated, was open to many of the intellectual and scientific viewpoints of the day; he was aware of most of the writings on the social and political ideas and to varying degrees influenced by them, if only in a negative sense.

Walter Bagehot's common sense attitude towards politics, the idea of getting to the realities behind the forms while recognizing the importance of both is readily apparent in Escott's writings. Escott himself, quotes extensively from Bagehot in dealing with the powers of the crown. Escott diverges, however, from Bagehot in feeling that the aristocracy is capable of much more real or efficient power than Bagehot feels is possible. Escott states that, "the proceedings of the House of Lords have acquired a new interest and importance."[116] Bagehot felt that the full power of the House of Lords must be used much more cautiously and timidly. Bagehot's attitude towards the importance of the aristocracy is somewhat different from Escott's also. Bagehot recognizes their importance, but also traces their decline.

The middle class element has gained greatly by the second change, and the aristocratic element has lost heavily. (Speaking of the Reform Act of 1867) If you examine carefully the lists of members, especially of the most prominent members, of either side of the House, you will not find that they are in general aristocratic names. Considering the power and the position of the titled aristocracy, you will perhaps be astonished at the small degree in which it contributes to the active part of our governing assembly.117

Escott feels, however, that, "an unusually large number of national measures have originated in the chamber of our hereditary legislators."118 Bagehot differs from Escott by seeing a gulf between the plutocracy and the aristocracy, where Escott sees harmony between them.

The spirit of our present House of Commons is plutocratic not aristocratic; its most prominent statesmen are not men of ancient descent or of great hereditary estate.119

Bagehot was writing, of course, in 1872 shortly after the Reform Act was passed. Possibly he might have become more optimistic regarding the powers of the Aristocracy if he had lived twenty more years to witness the Aristocratic revival of the 80's and 90's when men such as Salisbury, Churchill, Rosebery, Balfour, and Dilke rose to ruling positions and reasserted the power of the old families.

117 Bagehot, p. 23.
119 Bagehot, p. 29.
Both Bagehot and Escott agree in assessing the amount of deference which the English feel towards their leaders, as well as in fearing the rise of the uneducated democracy.

It is difficult to contrast Matthew Arnold with Escott since both use two different frames of reference; Arnold being more impressed by the lack of culture shown by the workers, where Escott is more concerned with their political leadership. Where Arnold believes in a liberal education for the masses, along the model of the Prussian system, Escott like most Victorians, was in favor of a more practical education for the worker's children. Arnold's views on religion are looked upon as too vague and abstract for the masses by Arnold.

Thomas Carlyle with his complete rejection of democracy, his demand for a benevolent despotism run along military lines, and his search for the Hero has a certain affinity with Escott's own ideas, but basically, he is far apart from Escott. Where Arnold appears repelled at the thought of mob violence, Carlyle's writings seem almost drenched with this sort of writing. Escott's own views on the people of England are much better balanced and more realistic than either Carlyle or Arnold. Escott's faith in the capacities of the English people keeps him from the fear which overrides Arnold or Carlyle.
Carlyle's writing, however, on the suffering of the poor and the need for a redress of the just grievances of the oppressed workers found a ready and sympathetic reader in Escott. Escott would agree with Carlyle that a revolutionary situation would arise in England, unless justice was done to the workers; but Escott would believe that this could be done within the framework of the present system.

John Stuart Mill's influence upon Escott is somewhat doubtful. Escott looks upon Mill with a mild distaste, feeling that he is too abstract, non-English, and does not recognize the importance of the factor of tradition in England.

Yet Mill, Arnold, Carlyle, and Bagehot all held one view in common which agreed with Escott's own views; this was a distrust in the ability of the democracy to govern such a country as England. While admitting that democracy was theoretically possible, they felt that conditions in England were such that, for a time at least, this creative elite, as Mill called it, must rule. Escott's distrust of the people was less deep, but he never really seemed to free himself completely from forebodings on the future of England unless the old ruling classes of the country kept a firm hand on the machinery of government.
If one searches for the most important influence upon Escott, one will find them in the novels of the Earl of Beaconsfield, Benjamin Disraeli. Escott, himself, constantly refers to them as important historical documents as well as guidelines to social and political movements of the present and future.

Disraeli, in his fifth edition of Coningsby (1849), explained that he used the literary form of the novel for the purposes of influencing opinion. It is certainly evident, that Disraeli was very successful in influencing the opinion of Escott, by Escott's own admission. Disraeli's Tory interpretation of history saw the Whigs as a facticus aristocracy whose principles excluded all other interests including the Crown, the Church, and the people.

In the selfish strife of factions, two great existences have been blotted out of the history of England, the Monarch and the Multitude; as the power of the Crown has diminished, the privileges of the people have disappeared; till at length the scepter has become a pageant and its subject has degenerated into a serf.120

Disraeli is never clear as to just how this is to be changed, since he reveals little respect for either the Whigs or the Conservatives. Disraeli was aware of this criticism which he tried to answer by pointing out that his novels recognized the element of romance in the governing of kingdoms being as important as reason.

His economic principles asserted the importance of the health and knowledge of the workers as an important element for the well being of the state, while his political principles rested upon the heroic tradition of a free aristocracy. Underlying all of this was the fact that no society could be built without the principles of loyalty and religious reverence.\textsuperscript{121}

This is a short basic summary of the main ideas of T.H.S. Escott, who freely admits the debt, intellectually, he owes the great Prime Minister. Certain other ideas, such as the impetus which the Reform Bill gave the aristocracy, are also to be found in both Disraeli's novels and the writings of Escott.

Robert Blake, the biographer of Disraeli, asks how seriously one should take the social philosophy found in Disraeli's novels, and answers, not very, since Disraeli was writing partly for emotional satisfaction, vanity, and above all to puncture early Victorian complacency. Disraeli is seen in 19th century thought, along with Coleridge and Carlyle, as akin to the romantic, conservative, organic thinkers who revolted against Benthamism and 18th century rationalism. Blake states that Disraeli never attempted to carry out the sort of program which he and his friends envisaged, and that the actual issues on which he fought Peel had little connection with the philosophy of the novels.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{122} Blake, p. 208.
It is important to note that while Disraeli attacked the Venetian oligarchy, placing it in the days of the four Georges, this form of government (the Whig-Liber alliance) basically existed in Disraeli's own day. There was thus a practical, political motive to his attack.

The difference between the aristocracy (which Disraeli praises) and the oligarchy of the Whigs (which he condemns) may appear purely metaphysical, until one notes this political motive which was the mainspring of Disraeli's philosophy. The Whigs, to Disraeli, were always characterized as a selfish political clique who had stupidly betrayed their own political interest. Even their name, the Venetian oligarchy, characterized them as un-English and contrary to good tradition. The true aristocracy, to Disraeli, consisted of rural England based upon the wealthy Tory squires who governed most of England.

Disraeli believed in a territorial aristocracy partly because he was at heart a romantic, partly because he had a genuine hatred of centralization, bureaucracy and every manifestation of the Benthamite state. He felt the sort of reverence that Burke had for the many independent corporations and institutions which...were the true bulwarks of English liberty.123

123 Blake, p. 282
This is basically Escott's own vision of England, but in assessing it, one must take into account the factors which are peculiar to Escott. He was raised on a vicarage by a socially prominent clergyman who had been educated in an upperclass institution, although, himself basically middle class. Escott attended the same institution and spent most of his early life attaining great wealth and associating with important political figure.

After he recovered, (at least partially) from his breakdown, it is obvious from the references in his work, that Escott spent most of his time in the company of the upper classes. While this is only conjecture, it is probable that he never got to know and understand even one English worker. This would account for his stereotyped notion of the worker; his knowledge of them seems to based almost entirely upon outside observation and tends towards the theoretical. At times his sense of alienation from the workers because of class differences becomes very noticeable. Rarely is it far below the surface of his writings.

But one must also realize that he was not one of the upper classes either, even though his money and education might, along with the needs of his profession, give him access to their friendship. This sense of never actually being one of the aristocracy, along with his alienation from the working classes might account for the romanticization with which he deals with these classes.
The apparent success with which the aristocracy was dealing with the rising working classes might have blinded him to their weaknesses and defects. One must beware of a simplistic approach to the problem of Escott's image of society; it is not difficult to find contradictions in his writings. Sometimes this is due to poor writing as when he refers to class fusion, when the context makes it apparent that he means class reconciliation. At other points it seems due to a lack of clarity in thinking. His occasional use of the word socialism, for example, is nothing more than the expression of a vague humanitarianism with some collectivist tendencies. At other times, he uses the term to refer to someone with extremely radical and levelling ideas.

He professes a strong faith in laissez-faire, but he is often willing to violate these principles when necessary to secure the working classes some needed benefits. While he urges that the higher orders ought to prevent the workers from gaining control of the state, he seems at other times to be almost happily resigned to the fact of real power passing into the hands of the workers. This apparent set of contradictions in his writings would seem to reflect the conflict in his own mind. A real fear and contempt for the ignorance and brutality of the lower stratum of the working classes is mingled with genuine admiration and respect for the honest, hard-working artisans and mechanics.
Escott cautions the reader against accepting too uncritically any estimate of the English worker.

He is no more uniformly sober than he is uniformly drunken... A socially and morally perfect and faultless working man is as impossible as the irredeemably vicious baron in novels or the spotless angelic child in nursery story books.124

Escott sees English society as an organic whole; any attempt to introduce sudden organic change will destroy the delicate balance of society and produce disaster. The upper classes must continue to lead the nation, because only they possess the education which gives them the knowledge necessary for decision making, the leisure which allows them to reflect upon these decisions, the tradition of just and wise governing, and the independence which allows them to rule in an impartial manner. Most of all, the upper classes have a tremendous stake in English society which forces them to take a responsible attitude towards government. Part of this responsible attitude consists in taking an intelligent interest in the welfare of the workers, since if they fail to do so, the workers will eventually take over their task.

---

The general influences of the time are all in the
direction of improvement. One may almost quote the
beautiful lines in Dr. Newman's 'Dream of Gerontuis': —

'He dred his penance age by age;
And step by step began
Slowly to doff his savage garb,
And be again a man.'

The agricultural laborer feels that he, too, like his urban
brother is a man. He has acquired a consciousness of power,
a growing sense of enlightenment, a widening perception of
rights and duties, which may be used as powerful levels for
his future amelioration. Talk to the average country
laborer today, and you will find him no longer the dull,
despondent being that he was a decade since, the horizon
of his views and knowledge being the boundaries of his parish,
or the field in which he was plying his task. His senses
have been quickened, his moral and mental nature has been
breathed upon with the breath of life. 125

This passage explains much of Escott's optimism concerning the future.

No man who views his fellow creatures in this light can ever truly fear
entrusting his country's destinies in their hands.

125

Ibid., p. 200.


"The Radical Programme." The Fortnightly Review. 1883.


The Times. Jan 5, 1880.

The Times. June 17, 1924.