SENDENBURGH

The Political Opinions of Robert Southey

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH
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THE POLITICAL OPINIONS OF ROBERT SOUTHEY

BY

EDITH IRENE SENDENBURGH
B. A. University of Illinois, 1913.

THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Edith Irene Sendenbrugge ENTITLED The Political Opinions of Robert Southey BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts in English

In Charge of Thesis
Stuart P. Sherman
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:

Committee on Final Examination*

*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.
# THE POLITICAL OPINIONS OF ROBERT SOUTHEY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY ESTIMATE AND BIOGRAPHY

An example of an author whom his contemporaries could not accurately estimate may be found in Robert Southey. Walter Savage Landor considered him the author of the best poems of his age or of the preceding one.¹ Except for Byron's acrimonious disparagement, Southey's literary fame seemed to have been assured in the opinion of many of his contemporaries, for a period of at least a hundred years. In his own time, he was not an inconspicuous member of the arbitrarily named group of Lake Poets in which he associated with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Now, however, very few of the long poems on which he based his hope of fame are read. Even his very excellent prose is little known; and it is possible to encounter in a university town a public library of fourteen thousand volumes, in whose catalogue the name, Robert Southey, does not appear.

Much of any immortality Southey may possess lies in the recorded criticisms on his political attitude. Byron and Hazlitt were unmerciful in their attacks, on the score of inconsistency, on the political life and thought of the "turncoat renegade." Other commentators have blindly accepted these adverse statements and have copied them or have incompetently attempted to refute them. Some have given too much credence to the conventional virulence of political attack and have made no effort to discover the man's true political sentiments thru an understanding of his

character and his relationship to his time. Such a consideration, I think, while not making Southey an admirable politician, will cause him to seem less contemptible than Byron would have him appear.

The fact that Southey (1774-1843) was living in the period of the French Revolution suggests at least two important considerations in regard to his political attitude. In the first place, no author of that period, however averse he might be temperamentally to participation in politics, could avoid being drawn into the current of revolutionary ideas. Again the bewildering events of the French Revolution upset most men's established and acquired ideas. The fact that Southey changed from a Jacobin Pantisocrat in 1794 to a loyal Tory is not peculiar. Wordsworth and Coleridge went thru similar evolutions. The difference seems to be that Southey appeared to profit more thru his apostasy by being given the laureateship in 1813. Thus he made himself a target for his enemies.

Southey's life was comparatively uneventful, consistent with his conservative character. Robert Southey, the son of a linen draper, was born at Bristol, August 13, 1774. He was connected with a distinguished family from the estate of which he for some time expected a legacy. His mother's family was responsible for many of Robert Southey's educational advantages. His mother's half-sister, Miss Tyler, kept the boy with her much of the time and initiated him into the delights of theatre-going. His uncle, Mr. Hill, a chaplain at Lisbon, provided for Southey's education and attempted to aid him in a professional career. Southey's life with his Aunt Tyler was rather abnormal for a
child. His associates were adults and his aunt was eccentric. He had much time alone for reading and thinking. When he was sent to Westminster (1778) to school it is not strange that he did not fit very well into the company of other boys. We have records of his individuality in dressing his hair and his unsocial habits. He was bullied till he was disgusted with a school system where "such tendencies could find expression." ¹

The final stroke came when he edited a school paper called "The Flagellant" and wrote for it an article sarcastically attacking corporal punishment, and ascribing the invention of flogging to the Devil. This seemed a harmless paper in the style of the Spectator; but it angered Dr. Vincent, the headmaster, so that he prosecuted for libel and Southey left school. The injustice of his treatment rankled in the youth's breast. His sensitiveness and revolutionary spirit of revolt against authority at this time are displayed in his letters to his friend Grosvenor Bedford.² He sarcastically suggests that they publish a volume of the nine numbers of "The Flagellant." He asks: "Shall we dedicate it to Envy, Hatred, and Malice and all Uncharitableness? Powerful arbitrators of the minds of men, who have already honored us with your marked attention, ye who can convert innocence into treason, and shielded by the arm of power, remain secure." ³ He submitted copies of the papers to his uncle, Mr.


In indicating references to collections of Southey's letters, I shall designate The Life and Correspondence edited by his son by the abbreviation "So.", and the selections of Warter by "W."
Hill. It is hinted that the latter was not severe with his nephew and secretly preserved the copies we possess of the pamphlet. With his report to his uncle, Southey hoped to drop the "subject forever in this world: in the next all hearts are open and no man's intentions are hid."  

In a letter to Thomas Philip Lamb, in a discussion of the character of the French, he says, "They order these things better' in England. Peg Nicholson is only in Bedlam; Tom Paine is treated with lenity; but woe be to him who dares attack the divine right of school masters to flog, or who presumes to think that boys should neither be treated absurdly or indecently."  

There is a touch of the hypersensitive, the melodramatic in his statement apropos of this episode that "I have undergone enough to break a dozen hearts; but mine is made of tough stuff, and the last misfortune serves to blunt the edge of the next." Even as late as 1818, he is reminded of the injustice of the affair.

One reason why the matter of "The Flagellant" assumed such importance in his mind, and, as it might be maintained, a vital influence in his future career, was that because of the report of the incident he was denied admittance to Christ Church, Oxford and went, instead, to the laxer Baliol College. After following his own inclinations there, he left college in 1794.

His uncle had planned that Southey should take orders, but the latter had imbibed some Unitarian ideas that made him

3. To G. May Nov. 16, 1818.
feel unfit for ordination. ¹ He believed that he might obtain an official position, but realized that an investigation of his republican views at Oxford would make it impossible for him to get a place under a Tory ministry. That would not have satisfied him anyway. He shows self analysis in saying "I doubt whether the quiet harmless situation I hoped for were proper for me. It certainly by imposing a prudential silence would have sullied my integrity." ² Yet Southey, indeed, was never bound by prudential silence. His letters show that as a natural result of the closing of these two fields, he turned his thoughts to America ¹ and took a rather practical interest in the scheme of Pantisocracy, which he planned with Coleridge. This undertaking we shall discuss at greater length later. The enthusiasts were unable to finance the project for which Southey had written "Joan of Arc." In 1794, he wrote "Wat Tyler." In 1795, he married Edith Fricker, a sister of Coleridge's wife, and went to Lisbon to study law. He tried to please his uncle and succeed in his second choice of a profession. He continued his study after he returned to London but dropped it before 1799. He did not care for it and was not fitted for a success in that field. He refused to consider a criminal law because he was unwilling to plead in a case of life and death. He lacked effective brilliant qualities: "I am anxious to be well, and to attempt the profession, much in it I shall never do: sometimes my principles stand in my way, sometimes the want of readiness which I felt from the first - a want which I feel

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in company and never in solitude and silence."¹

After another visit to Lisbon for his health in 1800 and a short tenure of a position as secretary to Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, he devoted himself to literature. In 1804, he established himself at Greta Hall near Keswick, where he lived, with occasional excursions, for the rest of his life. He shared his home with Coleridge's family, and much of the time, he supported them. His wife's health and mind failed, and she died in 1837. Four years before his own death in 1843, Southey married Caroline Ann Bowles who cared for him in the short period of the weakening of his mental powers.

During most of his life at Keswick, he was working indefatigably on his many projects and on his critical contributions to the reviews of the time. He was assisted by a few other sources of income. In 1797, he received an annuity from his friend Wynn for £160. This was replaced in 1807 by a pension of £144. In 1813, he was appointed poet laureate with a small stipend, which he though inadequately compensated him for all the task work the position imposed. He refused a seat in Parliament, in 1826, and later the offer of a baronetcy thru Peele, because the honor did not dazzle him to a realization of the expense and responsibility it entailed. He accepted, however, in lieu an additional pension of £300. He had invested very closely in insurance for his children; and he says that this was the first time he would have had enough ahead to meet such additional expense as his wife's illness brought.

We need list but simply Southey's most important literary productions. His chief long poems dealing with varied romantic themes are Joan of Arc (1793, with later revisions), Wat Tyler (1794), Madoc (1794-), Thalaba (1794-1800), The Curse of Kehama (1801-10), Roderick (1814), a translation of Amadis of Gaul (1803), and his laureate poems, Carmen Nuptiale (1816) and the Vision of Judgment (1821). With Coleridge he wrote a three act drama on Robespierre (1794). The short poems in which we shall be most interested are the Botany Bay Eclogues, and poems on the Slave Trade. His chief prose works are his Lives of Nelson, of Wesley, and of The Admirals, The Book of the Church, The History of the Peninsular War, The History of Brazil, The Doctor, Essays, Moral and Political, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society, Letters from England by Don Manual Alvarez Espriella. His many letters are also of literary importance.

Southey probably owed more than most authors to the influence of other great writers. During his residence with Miss Tyler, he became fairly familiar with fine literature. He always admired Spenser supremely. His ideals were shaped by Epictetus. For his Madoc he read the Bible, Homer, and Ossian. In 1796 he was put in touch with German romanticism thru his decided interest in William Taylor's translations.

He read and admired Godwin "for the mass of truth in his work that must make every man think," "The frequent and careful study of Godwin was of essential service. I read and all but worshipped. I have since seen his fundamental error, - that he theorizes for another state, not for the rule of conduct in the
present." 1 Himself an exception to the observation "that most public characters will ill endure examination in their private lives." 2 Southey became more conservatively unwilling to give his approbation to a man whose morals he could not approve. In 1804 he springs to the loyal defense of his friend Taylor against Godwin and expresses his contempt and anger that such men as Godwin and Malthus should come to such an issue on such a question as their "population" controversy. 3 In his essay on The State of the Poor (1812) he censures the political millennium of the French Revolution speculators, of whom Godwin, "the Goliath of the philosophistical Canaanites" was the master. "He had confounded together all principles pure and impure; he had diluted the wisdom of the ancients with his own errors and crudities." 4

One may believe from the frequency of his references to Rousseau that the latter may have had considerable influence on the contemplation and half developed ideas in Southey's mind during his early life. He styles himself as a "democratic philosopher" 5 who would not spare the time to turn aside to view the ducal palace of Blenheim. In the same period (1793) he writes, "What use can be made of a collegiate life, I wish to make; but in the midst of all when I look back to Rousseau, and

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compare myself with his Aemilius, the real pupil of Mme. Bruleuck, I feel ashamed and humbled at the comparison." 1 In the poems of 1795, he expresses his debt to Rousseau

"Guide of my life; too weak these lays,  
To pour the unutterable praise;  
Thine aid divine forever lend  
Still as my guardian sprite attend."  2

Southey's modified ideas in 1798 may be appreciated in his more qualified admiration of Rousseau. Then he says that Rousseau's confessions are like his Heloise; "as the mind that receives it is healthy or diseased, it becomes medicinal or poisonous." 3

"I do not look upon Rousseau with blind admiration: he was a miserable man, and I think of him with feelings of regret and compassion that make him the more interesting." 4 Rousseau's influence will appear, as upon all romanticists of the period, throughout his literature, but one feels that before eighteen hundred, Southey's not wholly impractical mind had overcome the extreme of Rousseau worship. 5

With a man whose political ideas are a matter of personal opinion rather than logical conviction, it is necessary to understand his character. Any one who has read Robert Southey's letters has become familiar with a vivid human personality that

1. To Chas. Collins, May 1, 1793. So. Vol I, page 178
offers an indubitable explanation of any expression in the author's writings. Southey's personal nature has never given occasion, even to his enemies, for very adverse criticism. He had the strength of character to live up to his high ethical ideals; yet he was human enough to have personal charm. He was independent in thought; he refused to sell his pen or alter his opinions for policy, but he did not seek controversy, and never flew in the face of established social conventions. He was preeminently a devoted husband and father. His letters are full of praise of domestic life. His children were very dear to him and the death of his son, Herbert, was an irreparable blow. Charming are the many passages of his letters addressed to or relating to his children. The naivete of his discussions of the cat upon whom he conferred the title, "His Serene Highness, the Archduke Rumpelstilzehen, Marquis Macbum, Earl Tomlemagne, Baron Raticle, Waowlher, and Skarack" relieve any impression of severe scholastic absorption.

His friendships were select but constant. His collected letters show a very intimate and faithfully sustained correspondence throughout his manhood with Grosvenor Bedford and C. W. Williams Wynn, men active in political life and of superior social position, but of similar tastes with Southey. Other frequent correspondents with whom he had a decided community of intellectual interests were John May, Charles Danvers, Thomas Philip Lamb, John Rickman (a clerk in Parliament, from whom he gained an account of Parliamentary proceedings to be used in his articles),

Rev. Neville White, Dr. Gooch, Henry Taylor and William Taylor, Mary Barker, and Caroline Bowles. Correspondents and friends definitely placed in the world of letters included William Taylor, Henry Taylor, Joseph Cottle, (Southey's publisher), Allan Cunningham, Charlotte Bronte, Caroline Bowles (his second wife, a poetess,) George Ticknor, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, and Walter Savage Landor. The last group of poets were his close friends. Few men could boast such a list; and it is a tribute to Southey, that, altho they might not agree in opinions, so many men could respect and desire to preserve his friendship. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey lived near each other in the Lake County. Southey admired Coleridge's mind as the latter extravagantly praised (at most times) Southey's integrity and ability; but Southey could hardly understand Coleridge's lack of dependability. Wordsworth and Southey were very similar in nature. As neighbors they may have been more intimate than there would be correspondence to indicate. Sir Walter Scott and Southey were mutually admiring. In Southey's favor, Scott refused a previous offer of the laureateship. A similarly cordial relationship existed between Southey and Landor. Gebir and The Curse of Kehama were each recognized by the other author as the greatest poem of the age. This attraction was the occasion of Byron's spiteful comment that he did not envy Southey Landor's friendship or the glory that will accrue from it. "This friendship will probably be as memorable as his own epics, which (as I quoted to him ten or twelve years ago in "English Bards") Porson said, would be remembered when Homer and

Vergil are forgotten, and not till then! "

Southey's contact with Shelley was short. The younger man usually reversed his admiration of people, and his extreme radicalism outstripped even Southey's sympathy; but all his judgments on the laureate illuminate the latter's personality and the attitude the latter inspired in acquaintances. These men were attracted to each other. Southey beheld in Shelley an image of his own ardent spirit revived from the past. He alone could understand Shelley and do him justice. Shelley writes of him after a visit: "You may conjecture that a man must possess high and estimable qualities, if, with the prejudices of such total differences from my sentiments, I can regard him great and worthy." "In fact Southey is an advocate of liberty and equality. He looks forward to a state when all shall be perfected and matter become subject to the omnipotence of mind. But he is now an advocate of existing establishments." But tho far from being a man of great reasoning powers, he is a great man. He has all that characterizes the poet; great eloquence, tho obstinacy in opinions, which arguments are the last things that can shake. He is a man of virtue. He will never belie what he thinks; his professions are in compatibility with his practice." Later, (Jan. 1812) Shelley considers Southey's mind narrow and contaminated by custom. He quotes Southey as saying that expediency ought to be made the ground of politics, but not of morals, and as failing

to see Shelley's reasoning that politics were morals comprehensively enforced. "He has a very happy knack, when truth goes against him of saying, 'Oh! when you are as old as I am you will think with me." ¹ Southey had found Shelley in the Pantisocratic stage, had introduced him to Berkley and performed other services of an older man to a younger.

Fine ideals were very important in Southey's life, but he was not overwhelmed by impractical chimaeras or vain strivings after the absolute. He was much more stable than Coleridge. His intellect was good and fine but lacked the strength and brilliancy requisite for a great author. He was essentially a scholar. His library was very large and his correspondence is full of comments on his reading and his research in antiquarian fields of literature. He was systematic in his study and writing, and had "an infinite capacity for taking pains." In his case, only indefatigable industry could have made/possible for him to earn his living with his pen. He did not shirk his responsibilities, but he much preferred a life of retirement. Had he lived in another age he probably would have been a greater poet. At that time a man could hardly ignore politics, and he was drawn into plans of political improvement where he exposed the limitations of his nature. He lacked brilliancy in connected reasoning on a political subject. (Hazlitt expressed it a little more extremely).¹ His integrity and sincerity even Hazlitt could not assail, but his ethical decisions were not always the correct ones. "Not at any period of his life for fear or favor was it possible for Southey to acquiesce in what he did not think right;

but what he thought right generally depended not on any coherent, not on any sound historical observation, but on a congeries of personal likings, dislikings, experiences and impressions generally.\textsuperscript{1} Hazlitt says: "Rash in his opinions, he is steady in his attachments – and is a man, in many particulars, admirable, in all respectable – his political inconsistency alone excepted."\textsuperscript{2} Southey himself says that he always had an ardent desire for the amelioration of mankind, but that "as he grew older his ideas as to the best means of that melioration changed." Southey seems from certain quotations and from the absence of argument in his letters to his friends to have an aversion to involving himself in early periods in warm discussions. Allowances must be made for the expurgations by the sympathetic collectors of his letters, but I should maintain that some commentators have disproportionately emphasized the idea that Southey was accustomed to take very antagonistically prejudiced stands. When he does express unflattering views of people there is usually a distinction between the man and his policy and seldom sustained bitterness. Byron and he attacked each other on the occasion of Southey's characterization, in The Vision of Judgment, of Byron as the founder of the Satanic School, and while Southey disapproved of Byron's life, and the public letters\textsuperscript{3} of 1823 and 1824 are virulent, his private correspondence is not much embittered. A desire for retirement, a contemplative spirit, a purity of motive, and perhaps a certain disciplining of character are more conspicuous than habitual aggressiveness or enthusiasm for opposition.

\textsuperscript{2} Collected Wks. of Wm. Hazlitt, Vol. IV, page 268.
\textsuperscript{3} Appendix, So. Vol V.
In 1796, he writes "No Grosvenor, you and I shall not talk politics." In 1799, he more exactly expresses his pacific attitude: "Once indeed, I had a mimosa sensibility, but it has long ago been rooted out. Five years ago, I counteracted Rousseau by dieting upon Godwin and Epictetus: they did me some good, but time has done more. I have a dislike to all strong emotion and whatever could excite it. A book like Werther gives me now - - - - unmingled pain. In my own writings you may observe I dwell rather upon effects than what agitates." At another time he writes of a "hateful day; the fellows would talk politics of which they knew nothing." (Fairness demands an acknowledgement that in the expurgated portions of this letter Southey may have shown himself radically assured that he himself knew more.) This calm was a preparation for his developing decided conservatism.

Southey's religious shifting paralleled his political evolution. A development of ideas of deism and Unitarianism prevented his taking orders. He was decidedly opposed to Catholicism. His observations of Catholic superstition and charlatanry in Spain and Portugal prejudiced him to as great an extreme as he often reaches. He believed that a Catholic's opinions automatically disqualified him for parliament just as a Jew's creed would disqualify him for a bishopric. Southey professed

4. Dowden, Biography.
tolerance, but he said you might as well let a fire burn or a pestilence spread as suffer the propagation of popery.¹ He associated popery with political oppression.

"A true high priest

Preaching humility with his mitre on:
Praising up alms and Christian Charity
Even whilst his unforgiving hand distressed
His honest tenants."²

Southey's religious opinions enter largely into his poem Madoc, as he dwells on perversions of religion in Wales and in America and shows his ideals of liberality, freedom, and purity. Southey did, however, admire the Jesuits. He was interested in missions, for he believed that the future state of mankind rested on the spread of Christianity.³ He was impressed by the fact that the Jesuits had succeeded in preaching Christianity where every one else had failed.⁴ I am grown a great Jesuitophilist and begin to think that they were the most enlightened personages that ever condescended to look after this little snug farm of earth."⁵ Southey was not appealed to by the "grim logic and stark spirituality of Geneva. He was half a Quaker but desired more visible

². Wat Tyler, Vol. III, 2c.1. 1.6.
beauty. He finally found in the Anglican Church a "comely home for his spiritual affections. He loved her tolerance and culture; and his loyalty to the church kept pace with his growing loyalty to the state.¹

¹ For the unillustrated outline of Southey's religious views, I am indebted to Dowden's Biography.
CHAPTER II
EARLY DEMOCRATIC IDEAS

As causation is a continual process, so it is difficult to divide a man's political evolution into distinct stages. I have arbitrarily set the date of the treaty of Amiens, 1803, as the end of Southey's early period of whatever Jacobinism it may have contained. Southey himself considered this a significant date, for he later writes that the treaty of Amiens "restored in me the English feeling which had been deadened; it placed me in sympathy with my country; bringing me thus into that natural and healthy state of mind upon which time and knowledge, and reflection were sure to produce their proper and salutary effect." ¹

In Southey's political attitude before 1803 we find two distinct phases, Pantisocracy and ideas connected immediately with the French Revolution.

Early in his college life, Southey's romantic nature had felt the appeal of the Golden Age and the ideal of its restoration.

"O happy age!"

He cried, when all the family of man
Freely enjoyed their goodly heritage,
And only bowed the knee in prayer to God!
Calm flowed the unruffled stream of years along
Till o'er the peaceful rustic's head the hair
Grew gray in full of time."²

"And such the evening of my day
Fondly I hoped; and would that I had lived
In those old times, or till some better age
Slumbered unborn! for this is a hard race,
An evil generation;" 1

In 1793 before his famous meeting with Coleridge (1794), comments in Southey's letters indicate considerable contemplation of the subject. He writes rather fancifully of reading an account of how Plotinus asked Gallienus for the ruined city of Campania which he would rebuild and people with philosophers governed by the laws of Plato, from whence the name of the city would be Platonopolis. Tho such a plan "would have been impracticable," Southey wishes it had been tried. Then he confides to his friend whimsical fancies of a city of his own all "simplex munditiis," "his favorite quotation." And he continues in one of those gently humorous passages which suggest so much of self portrayal. "If you were with me, Southey-opolis would soon be divided into two sects; whilst I should be governing with Plato (correcting of few of Plato's absurdities with some of my own) and almost deifying Alcaens, Lucan, and Milton, you (as visionary as myself) would be dreaming of Utopian kings possessed of the virtue of the Autonines regulated by peers everyone of whom should be a Falkland, and by a popular assembly where every man should write the integrity of a Cato, the eloquence of a Demosthenes, and the loyalty of a Jacobin." 2 (Did Southey class Jacobin loyalty with Cato's

integration?) In contemplating the fall of Greece, at another time, he fancies leading a band of republicans to restore Greece. The loftiness of the ideal he indicates in Madoc.

"Sprung it from bardiclore
The hidden wisdom of the years of old,
Forgotten long, or did it visit thee
In dreams, that come from heaven?

That man should rule the elements - and there
Might manly courage, manly wisdom find
Some happy isle, some undiscovered shore,
Some resting place for peace." 2

Before they had made any plans, Southey had been impressed, as others had been before him, by the possibilities America offered to idealists,

"Beyond the seas
A country for his children ----
A land wherein their portion may be peace". 3

Cowley had dreamed of going to America to find in solitude what he could not find in society. Southey writes, "My asylum there would be for different reasons (and no prospect in life gives me half the pleasure this visionary one affords). I would be pleased to reside in a country where men's abilities would ensure respect; where society was upon a proper footing and man was con-

2. Madoc, III. (bk.)
Considered as more valuable than money; and where I could till the earth ——" 1 About a month later he is bewailing the misfortunes of his friends which he believes would never exist if man were what Nature intended him to be; and he is moved to observe: "The more I see of this world the more I am convinced that society requires desperate remedies." The only ray that enlivens the scene beams on America." 2 In realizing his unfitness for ordination he writes to Bedford: "The wants of man are so very few that they must be attainable somewhere, and whether here or in America, matters little: I have long learned to look upon the world as my country." 3 Then he continues in a vein which indicates that he is not laboring under any delusion about the imperfections of America. "Now if you are in the mood for reverie, only fancy me in America; imagine my ground uncultivated since the creation, and see me wielding the axe, now to cut down the tree and now the snakes that nestled in it. Then see me grubbing up the roots and building a nice, snug little dairy with them; three rooms in my cottage, and my only companion some poor negro whom I had bought on purpose to emancipate. After a hard day's toil, see me sleep upon rushes, and in very bad weather, take out my cassette and write you, for you shall positively write me in America. Do not imagine I shall leave rhyming or philosophizing, so thus your friend will realize

the romance of Cowley, and even outdo the seclusion of Rousseau; till at last comes an ill looking Indian with a tomahawk and scalps me - a most melancholy proof that society is very bad and that I shall have done very little to improve it."¹

It was at this time that Southey was finding that he could not take orders and could not enter into an official position. He was particularly free. He expresses himself as having no object of pursuit in life except to "fill the passing hour and fit" himself "for death." "To be of service to my friends would be serving myself most essentially; and there are few enterprises however hazardous and however romantic in which I would not willingly engage."² These conditions and Southey's interest indicated in previous quotations prepare us for his cooperation with Coleridge in the scheme of "Pantisocracy" and "Aspheterism" when they met in 1794.

In 1794 Coleridge visited Baliol College and he and Southey were attracted to each other. With a friend, Robert Lovell, they developed the plan of Pantisocracy (equal government of all) and Aspheterism (the generalization of individual property); and talked of their ideas enthusiastically and incessantly. The following persons are some of those named as supporters of the plan and as pantisocratic colonists: George Burnett, Robert Allen, Edmund Seward (who later withdrew support, believing it a result of enthusiasm); Thomas Southey (Robert's brother), Southey's mother, the Frickers, Heath, Favell, Le Grice, and it was suggested that

Dr. Priestly might join them. Coleridge was wildly enthusiastic about the scheme. Southey, while he realized new hope, and new energy in a plan which gave him hope of happiness, was a little quieter in his enthusiasm. Him we find inquiring of his sailor brother about the price of his common blue trousers and listing his proposed equipment. "From a young American land agent they receive much information about America, about land values and clearing. He advises them to settle on the Susquehanna because of its excessive beauty and security from Indians; and he assures them that literary characters make money there." The plan developed steadily, but they found that the party was too poor to raise the £2000 which was estimated to be necessary for the undertaking. Southey published Joan of Arc to help with his share of expense. Southey and Coleridge gave series of lectures, - Southey on subjects of a general view of world history, and Coleridge on the French Revolution. Finally when the promoters perceived how far away fulfillment of their hopes was, there was a suggestion that they try a similar scheme in Wales. The financing of even that was not forthcoming and the whole project was gradually abandoned. Coleridge blamed Southey for not continuing in loyal support. This, a disagreement between them over the question of servants in the scheme, a hitch in their lecture program, and Coleridge's charge that for Pantisocracy he had given up his sweetheart, Mary Evans, to marry Sarah Fricker, a sister of the wives' of Lovell and Southey, led to an estrangement between the

1. Coleridge to Southey, Sept.18, 1794. So. I, p. 219
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two leaders. After Southey's marriage to Edith Fricker (these marriages were part of the Pantisocratic scheme), Southey went to Portugal, and, for him, the subject of Pantisocracy was practically dosed, excepting perhaps that he was never reinstated in the favor of his aunt, Miss Tyler, who had turned against him upon hearing of Pantisocracy and Miss Fricker.

A more complete analysis of Southey's attitude toward Pantisocracy would be interesting. We are justified, I think, from Southey's correspondence on this and other subjects, in assuming that his interest in Pantisocracy was personal rather than social. While his democratic ideals were very high, and the ideal community enters into Madoc, his love for retirement and study was too great for him to feel so intensely, in a personal, rather than a literary way, the responsibility of the immediate perfection of human society. He labored under no delusions about the absolute regeneration of men under revolutionary influences. He believed in slow progress. "He acts the wisest part who retires from the contagion, nor is that part either a selfish or a cowardly one: it is ascending the ark, like Noah to preserve a remnant which may become a whole." ¹ This was his attitude indeed. He was appealed to by the peace offered under the Pantisocratic scheme and the opportunity that it offered him for healthy self development far from crowding responsibilities and distracting environment. It was as practical a consideration for him as a professional man's desire to move to the country would be, even tho it might be impracticable. Southey was prepared to look on the project clearly from the first. In dis-

cussing some of the early Utopian schemes, he had said. "The design would probably have proved impracticable in that declining and degenerat age, most probably in any age."¹ He realized the dissensions that would rise among the enthusiasts. So we feel that his honorable resignation in 1795 was not inconsistent with his character, in which enthusiasm appears usually restrained by contemplation and conservatism.

Naturally Southey was influenced by the democratic ideals of the French Revolution. Wat Tyler is full of youthful declamatory effusions directed against authority and class distinctions. This very amateurish drama was written in 1794 and lay unpublished till 1817, when it was stolen and printed without the author's consent. It was produced by a certain William Smith in a speech on the floor of Parliament to show the difference in the sentiments of the laureate, Robert Southey, before and after he enjoyed court favor. Southey did not apologize for the sentiments. He explained them by his youthful generosity and the exigencies of dramatic representation. He said of the attack: "This affair would not have affected me more than the blowing of the wind if it had not made my wife seriously ill; and thus it has vexed me so much, that I could certainly have challenged William Smith, if a sense of duty did not withhold me."² With the advantage of his own experience, Southey in 1809, tries to dissuade Ebenezer Elliott from publishing a long narrative anti national poem. This latter characteristic is a grievous dis-

² To Wynne, Apr. 6, 1817, W. III; 67-9.
advantage, "for tho we have both been right in our feelings, yet to feel against our country can only be right upon great and transitory occasions, and none but our contemporaries can feel with us." ¹

Perhaps we can obtain the best idea of the nature of the influence of Revolutionary ideals on Southey by quoting some of the most radical passages of that poem. We may also see what sentiments of his young manhood, — or rather speeches given to dramatic figures — were brought up by his political critics to confront the laureate.

"Hob. ' —— of what service is the state?'

Tyler.'Oh, tis vast importance! who should pay for The luxuries and riots of the court?

Who should support the flaunting courtiers pride,

Pay for their midnight revels, their rich garments,

Did not the state enforce? Think ye, my friend That I, a humble blacksmith here at Deptford Would part with these six groats, earned by hard toil,

All that I have to massacre the Frenchmen, Murder as enemies men I never saw,

Did not the state compel me?" ²

He ironically attacks corruption in kings and courts.

Archbishop. —"There is divinity about your person,

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² Wat Tyler, Act I, page 33.
It is the sacred privilege of kings,
Howe'er they act, to render no account
To man." 1

"Ay, there's nothing like
A fair, free open trial, where the king
Can choose his jury and appoint his judges." 2

"The faith of courts
Is but a weak dependence. You are honest;
And better is it even to die the victim
Of credulous honesty, than live preserved
by the cold policy that still suspects." 3

Frequent are the lofty expressions of human equality.
J. Ball. - "All mankind as brethren must be equal"
That privileged orders of society
Are evil and oppressive; that the right
Of property is a juggle to deceive
The poor, whom you oppress." 4

"Nature gives enough
For all; but man with arrogant selfishness,
proud of his heape, hoards up superfluous stores
Robbed from his weaker fellows, starves the poor,
Or gives to pity what he owes to justice." 5

1. Wat Tyler, Act II, scene 2, page 35.
2. Wat Tyler, Act III, scene 2, line 7.
3. Wat Tyler, Act II, Scene 2, page 49.
5. Wat Tyler, Act I, page 35.
"Why do we fear those animals called lords? What is there in the name to frighten us? Is not my arm as mighty as a baron's?" 1

"Oh, I am grieved that we must gain so little. Why are not all these empty ranks abolished; King, slave, and lord ennobled into Man? Are we not equal all? Have you not told me Equality is the sacred right of man, - Inalienable, tho' by force withheld?" 2

He even seems to justify violence in putting this speech in the mouth of John Ball.

"Aye, Piers, our nobles level down their vassals, Keep them at endless labor like their brutes Degrading every faculty by servitude, Repressing all the energy of mind. We must not wonder then, that like wild beasts When they have burst their chains with brutal rage They revenge them on their tyrants."

Yet Southey was not ready to exalt "the giddy multitude, blind to their own good," 4 and as he perceived the excesses of the French Revolution, he realized that no one class was alone naturally oppressive, but that

"with its shade

1. Wat Tyler, Act I, page 35.
2. Wat Tyler, Act II, scene 1, page 43.
3. Wat Tyler, Act III, scene 1, page 57.
Too oft doth power, a death dew dropping tree
Blast every herb beneath its baleful boughs."  

It is interesting to note that in the Curse of Kehama, (which introduces democratic elements in the story of Balyand his "Golden Age" and in the miraculous rescue of Kaibyal by Mariattally, goddess of the common people) the despotic sorcerer, Kehama, joins in hell the accursed abusers of earthly power in wealth, empire, and religion, who now uphold the golden throne.  

As Southey's ideas develop we feel that he ceases to lay the blame of wretchedness of society wholly on class hatred but believes that ignorance and the limitations of human nature are more or less responsible.

"O what a glorious animal were Man
Knew he but his own powers, and knowing gave them
Room for their growth and spread!"  

"As to what is the cause of the incalculable wretchedness of society," he writes in 1797, "and what is the panacea, I have long felt certified in my mind. The rich are strangely ignorant of the miseries to which the lower and largest part of mankind are abandoned. The savage and civilized states are alike unnatural, alike unworthy of the origin and end of man. Hence the prevalence of skepticism and atheism which, from being the effect, becomes the cause of vice."  

But Southey has hopes of a brighter future

2. Curse of Kehama, XXIV, 6.
3. Thalaba, IV, page 247.
for this "lazar house of society",¹ when

"Time

Hath spoken, and the multitude of years

Taught wisdom to mankind." ²

Charles Cestre brings out Southey's democratic tendency in emphasizing the characters of common people rather than historical personages in his historical poems, Wat Tyler and Joan of Arc. "Southey rehabilite le peuple, qui de puis trop longtemps est eclipse par les puissants; il répare a son égard l'injustice en la literature et de l'histoire" ³ "Car n'est-ce pas eux; ces inconnus,ces ignores, qui sont les vrais héros de l'histoire?"

In connection with Southey's attitude toward the French Revolution, we notice, in his letters, several tendencies which might not be what we would expect. It is not strange that contemporaries did not agree in styling Southey a Jacobin, because the first letters in which he expresses himself definitely on the French Revolution are written in 1792, after the September massacres, when Southey, more quickly than some republicans, had realized that the cause of the revolutionists was not that of freedom. Again we are impressed by the comparative paucity of his expressions on the subject of the world war. Only a few of the tragic events, which had a personal appeal, seemed to occupy much of his thoughts. Just as many American scholars during the great European war, the twentieth century counterpart of the

². Joan of Arc, I. Note also Wat Tyler, Act I, scene 2.
Napoleonic wars, seldom, in friendly correspondence, mention the appalling events, unless to regret the loss of life and of art treasures; so Southey and most of his friends seem, much of the time, to ignore the strife for more congenial subjects. Southey expresses himself more decidedly in his letters to Thomas Philip Lamb, who seemed to hold more pessimistic views than Southey was prepared to support. Thirdly, we find in Southey's republican ideas, little that is original. They are more or less hazy and conventional. "Les convictions de Southey, vives et sincères, ne furent ni très personnelles, ni murement raisonnées." ¹

Southey's humanitarian aversion to dwelling on the horrors of war or anything that would stir "violent emotions" ² kept him from discussing the war so much. He says apropos of Joan of Arc: "I found the battles detestable to write as you to read: yet there are not ten better lines in the whole piece than those beginning, 'Of unrecorded name died the mean man, yet he did leave behind..." (Bk. 7). I felt in reading Joan of Arc that Southey's frequent emphasis on the sacrifice to war, the lives of the slaughtered, and the fate and grief of the bereaved ones, while in beautiful twentieth century pacifist spirit, was too sympathetic to be, in his theme of Joan, forceful. In Wat Tyler and Joan of Arc we frequently find such passages as these

¹ C. Cestre - La Révolution Francaise et les Poetes Anglais, page 168.
"Think ye, my friend,
That I a humble blacksmith here at Deftford
Would part with these six groats, earned by hard toil
All that I have, to massacre Frenchmen,
Murder as enemies men I never saw,
Did not the state compel me?" ¹

"Who dared to risk
The life his goodness gave us, on the chance
Of War, and in obedience to our chiefs
Durst disobey our God." ²

Southey's remarks on Prussian militarism sound very up to date. He notes the report of Brunswick's success, which he thinks the "mobocracy" deserved, and which would not have happened "had Fayette been there:" - "But leaving their present hostilities out of the question, I do think the Prussians have been plagues to human nature for this last century, and were sent to plague mankind, and their leaders to plague them. The French are tigers and apes; but what are those animals, disciplined till they forget obedience to every divine law and every dictate of humanity, in a blind submission to their military despot." ³

I shall quote entire the first part of a letter written to Thomas Philip Lamb in 1792 in which Southey expresses his understanding of the degeneracy of the revolutionists, his con-

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2. Joan of Arc, Book IX.
fidence in the goodness of the underlying principles and his admiration for LaFayette.

"Time has justified all your prophecies with regard to my French friends. The Jacobins, the Sans Culottes, and the fishwomen carry everything before them. Everything that is respectable, every barrier that is sacred, is swept away by the ungovernable torrent."

"The people have changed tyrants, and, for the mild irresolute Louis, bow to the savage, the unrelenting Petion. After so open a declaration of abhorrence, you may perhaps expect that all the sanguine dreams of romantic liberty are gone forever. It is true, I have seen the difficulty of saying to the mob, 'thus far, no farther.' I have seen a structure raised by the hand of wisdom, and defended by the sword of liberty, undermined by innovation, hurled from its basis by faction and insulted by the proud abuse of despotism. Is it less respectable for its misfortunes? These horrid barbarities, however, have rendered me totally indifferent to the fate of France."

"Before I quit the French, let me remark that that very national Assembly, which you have stigmatized as a rabble of pettifogging attorneys and illiterate barbarians, has furnished men who had the courage to preserve their duty at the expense of their lives." 1

Southey perceived a quality in the character of the French people that makes such horrors possible. He denies any change. He instances their natural ferocity in the massacre of St. Bartholomew and such events, and in "the enormities they

The text on this page is not legible due to the quality of the image and the nature of the content. It appears to be a block of text, possibly discussing a topic or set of instructions, but the specifics cannot be accurately transcribed.
committed in America before they appeared as protectors of revolution" - these are "so many views of their real disposition permanent amidst all the tinsel of affectation." 1

The deaths of Antoinette and Brissot in 1793 dispelled any remaining faith in the revolutionists.

"To suppose that I felt other than grieved and indignant at the fate of the unfortunate queen of France was supposing me a brute" -- "You seemed glad, when arguments against the scheme of republicanism had failed, to grasp at the crimes of wretches who call themselves republicans and stir up my feelings against my judgment." 2

The death of Brissot, a revolutionary leader who became a victim of the extremists, threw Southey into one of the most pessimistic states of mind we see expressed. "I am sick of this world and disgusted with every one in it. The murder of Brissot has completely harrowed my faculties, and I begin to believe that virtue can only aspire to content in obscurity: for happiness is out of the question. I look round the world and everywhere find the same mournful spectacle, - the strong tyrannizing over the weak, man and beast;" 3

Naturally Southey, like most democrats, at the beginning of the French war, disapproved of England's joining the "leagued despots of Europe" 4; but Napoleon's spirit of aggression was so

1. Ibid - later letter.
4. Robespierre Act III.
contrary to the poet's nature that the latter never idolized him. "I never liked the Corsican and now he has given me new offence by his absurd misnomers, which go to confound all the fixed ideas of consuls, tribunes, and senate." ¹ (This in 1800 after Napoleon's coup d'état.)

In a letter to Lord Sidmouth (July 30, 1822)¹ Southey passes mature judgment on his earlier ideas:

"I am one of the many persons who, at the beginning of the French Revolution, were deceived by its specious promises. The error is not one upon which I look back either with compunction or shame. It was connected with generous feelings, and pursued with an utter disregard of worldly interests. Youth, ignorance, and an ardent mind, rendered me easy to be so deluded. I believed that the war in which this country was engaged against France was unjust in its commencement and iniquitous in its object; and I was ill informed enough to suppose that popular governments must needs be free, and that whenever such governments could be established, there in the natural course of things, the people would become virtuous and happy. Thus prejudiced, I suffered myself to be persuaded that the crimes of the Revolution were caused by the resistance that was opposed to it." Even after he lost faith in France, he believed the English war was wrong until the peace of Amiens, 1802, restored him to sympathy.

Southey frequently explained his apparent change in attitude toward the Revolution by this assertion: "France has

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played the traitor with liberty." "It is not I who have turned around. I stand where I stood, looking at the rising sun - and now the sun has set behind me." Southey's evolution in attitude was similar to that of Coleridge as expressed in his ode, France, developing from glory in France's revolution and shame in England's opposition; thru horror of the Reign of Terror, still tinged with hope of their learning wisdom; to the realization, at last, that Liberty's name had become a cloak for despotism. True liberty

"nor swellst the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power."¹

(Compare this with Southey's sentiment of "Power, a death dew dropping tree" ².) Even Byron's ideas were changed by Napoleon.

"By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught the rest to see." ³

Thus it must be confessed that Southey's ideas concerning the method of the amelioration of mankind did undergo some modification. The change, however, was not a sudden or unnatural one, nor could it be traced to any benefit to himself, since we note the change long before he received any public office and when his bold criticism of the ministry precluded the idea of his catering to their favor. His biographers are likely to forget, too, that almost everything upon which Southey's Jacobinical reputation is based was written while he was a youth of less than twenty, under

3. Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte. Byron.
the influence of reading and of the atmosphere of the age. Most of the radical statements are in the suppressed exercise, Wat Tyler. In a careful study of Southey's life and thought as expressed in his letters, one feels that he never, even in the early period, really believed people of the lower classes in society or education were of equal value with himself. It was quite consistent with his naturally conservative temperament that his democratic and revolutionary views should be modified by experience and reflection. Just as he considered infidelity "a step in the progress of an active mind," ¹ he came to say with deterministic optimism:

"The whirlwind of the Revolution was necessary to clear away the pestilence of the old governments, and I think as you do, that in the moral government of the world and of the universe, general results are those which are contemplated; - and that to these individuals, species, and nations will sometimes be sacrificed. The belief that good is stronger than evil sets all right upon the great scale, and all is set right for individuals also in a future state." ¹

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¹. To Rickman, Nov. 30, 1813. W. II, page 338.
SOUTHHEY'S distrust of the ability of the mob to judge wisely, as expressed before 1802, was crystallized in the period of his political maturity; and, altho he still believed in the ultimate perfectibility of mankind and thought that "England is mending, will mend", he considered that there was more danger henceforth from anarchy than from tyranny. He came, like Burke, to lay emphasis on the conservation, for the good of society, of established institutions, and so he recognized the differing values of different men and classes as conservators. It was from this point that he made his conservative departure from Rousseau and Paine. In a passage in the Colloquies, he expresses his respect for antiquity and his belief that governments ought to encourage for the people whatever tends to withdraw them from the "influence of the present and connect them with other times, past or to come." "They who care nothing for their ancestors, will care little for their posterity, - indeed little for anything except themselves."¹ This is almost the exact phrasing of a statement of Burke's.²

The extent to which Southey came in these later years to repudiate Rousseau's central doctrine of Abstract Rights may be seen in this comment: "The science of politics is just now in the same stage (as humour stage in therapeutics): it has been erected by shallow sophists upon abstract rights and imaginary

¹ Colloquies II, page 57.
compacts, without the slightest reference to habits and history; but in ignorance of the one, and contempt of the other." 1 and in his quotation of this opinion of Burke's:

"Care ought to be taken that men do not, under the colour of an abstract principle, deceive themselves. Abstract principles are what my clumsy apprehension can not grasp: I must have a principle embodied in some manner or other, and the conduct held upon it ascertained, before I can pretend to judge of its propriety and advantage in practice. But of all abstract principles, abstract principles of natural right are the most idle because the most useless and the most dangerous to resort to. They would supersede society and break asunder all those bonds which have formed the happiness of mankind for ages. I will venture to say that if we go back to abstract rights, there will be an end of all society." 2

Southey was convinced that the principles for which the Jacobins formerly stood could now best be realized under the wiser guidance of a strong centralized government and that the state of England was much more perfect than that of France. Such centralization was not inconsistent with Utopian ideals. In all ideal schemes "a greater superintendence is supposed on the part of the magistrates and a greater interference with the actions of individuals and the occupations of private life than has ever been exercised under the most despotic monarchies." 3

The appellation of "Jacobin" was frequently applied to our poet, even after 1803, when Jacobinism had "sunk from the middle and reasoning classes to the mob." With the later bearers of the name, Southey had nothing in common. "Walter Scott, whom I look upon as complete an anti-Jacobin as need be, does not sing out more loudly "Fight on my merry men, all" than I do." 1 Napoleon early extinguished the Jacobin spirit among English leaders. "Never was there a time when the English were so decidedly anti-Gallican, those very persons being the most so who formerly regarded France with the warmest hopes." 2 The following effective passage from Southey's essays represents the ideas expressed often before he attained the laureateship in 1813.

"There was a wild cosmopolite character about the democracy of the last generation; old men of warm hearts and sanguine spirits sang their 'Nunc dimittis'; and young men of ardent mind and generous in experience became enthusiastic disciples of a political faith which ushered itself into the world with the lying annunciation of 'Peace on earth, good will among men.' The better spirits who were thus led astray by the prospects which the French Revolution seemed, as they thought, at its commencement, to open for human kind, mingled their crude politics with principles as crude, but which were both too generous and too wild to ever become popular. Their talk was not merely of the rights of man, but the hopes and destinies of the human race; of rapid improvement and indefinite progression. The populace were incapable of entering into such views; they beheld nothing in these visionaries but their direct political bearing; and finding them hostile

to the Anti Jacobin war, regarded them as men who preferred France to England and therefore as enemies to their country."  

When Southey began to contribute to the Quarterly Review, he declared himself as being definitely opposed to the principles of the Jacobins. The Edinburgh Review, under the editorship of Jeffrey promulgated the view that there was no hope in opposing Bonaparte, that Europe must pass into his control, and, what most incensed Southey - that it was advisable to leave Spain to her fate. Southey's contribution to this Review had been invited, but he refused because of his disapproval of Jeffrey's principles. He especially resented the attempt of the Edinburgh Review to give the opposition a Jacobin character. Scott suggested the establishment of another paper "to counteract the base and rascally politics of Jeffrey and that peace mongering squad who would lay us at the feet of France". To this Southey was asked to contribute; and, after formulating his political ideas and stipulating freedom of expression, he accepted. (1809.) His work was to be chiefly literary with special articles from his field of particular excellence, Spanish literature. It is probable that it was thru his intense interest in Spain, that he became more concerned in the political events connecting it with England. He wrote for the Quarterly for thirty years, expressing in it most of his economic, religious, literary and political ideas. Some of the representative political articles, he collect-

2. To Wynn, Dec. 19, 1807. W\(\text{II}\), 35.
3. To Wynn, Jan 20, 09. W, II, 124.
ed and reprinted under the title, Essays, Moral and Political. These articles may not be accepted as the exact views of the poet. He, himself said that he could express himself more freely in Espriella. Gifford, the editor of the Quarterly Review, did not always approve of Southey's contributions. He made frequent modifications and omissions, in which he may have been justified by policy, considering Southey's fearless frankness; but which did not improve his relations with the independent poet. The unyielding conservatism of the latter is easily recognized throughout his papers. His defiant unaltered adherence, in later years, to his standard convictions made him, in a progressive age, very conspicuous.

In 1816, he was asked to confer with the Liverpool ministry to conduct a political Journal to counteract the effect of the press. He did not consider an interview wise, believing he must "appear confused and visionary, an impractical sort of man."

"So far as I can render any service toward upholding the existing government (by which you will understand I do not mean a mere ministry, but the old English order of things as by our Fathers established, and by me to be, if possible, transmitted unimpaired), I am ready to exert myself to the utmost without regard to any personal considerations. But in what manner I could do this more effectually than I have for seven years past been endeavoring to do it in the Quarterly Review and during four
years in the Edinburgh Annual Register, I can not tell."  

His friend, Henry Taylor, advised Southey to discontinue political writing, telling him frankly that in a day when many men were making a special study of political questions, a poet in literary retirement was not competent to discuss them. This same friend secured Southey's admission that he would have made a bad statesman because he stated a strong reason as a conclusive one.

Whatever Southey's shortcomings as a political writer, and however posterity may regret that hack work in the political field took so much of the attention of a great author, we realize that he believed he was performing a valuable service to the state and a duty which he could not ignore.

"The poets and philosophers as well as the divines, have ever reckoned exemption from affairs of this kind (politics) among the first blessings to be desired by those who would live well and wisely: and truly it is no light evil to men who would fain live for posterity and for themselves in the worthiest sense, when these cares break in upon them, to interrupt their labours and disturb the tranquillity of their meditations. The course of ordinary politics is to them like the course of the seasons, to be regarded with no greater anxiety, in sure belief that the same Providence which disposes the seasons will dispose the events of the

1. To Bedford, Sept. 7, 1816, W. IV, 43
world also in such manner that they will work together for good. Such things require only that calm and pleasurable attention which is necessary for obtaining a competent knowledge of current history; and the violence with which party matters are agitated and the occasional gusts of popular passion are to them like the wind, which bloweth as it listeth. But when questions are at stake in which the great interests of mankind or the safety, honor, and welfare of their own country are nearly concerned, it is no longer fitting that they should look on as indifferent observers. By the fundamental laws of England, every man is bound to bear arms against an invading army; and when worse dangers than invasion are designed and threatened, it becomes the duty of all those who have any means of obtaining public attention to stand forward and, by resisting the danger, endeavor, as far as in them lies, to avert it!¹

To twentieth century readers, his confidence in the strength of his own influence seems conceited. Of his projected Colloquies, he says: "I hope it will not be read without leading some persons both to think and feel as they ought. In more than one instance I have had the satisfaction of being told that my papers in the Q.R. have confirmed some who were wavering in their opinions, and reclaimed others who were wrong."² We forget that he was often considered the foremost author of his time, that he was the Poet Laureate, and was a man, the integrity of whose character was almost irreproachable - having received only advertisement thru the Wat Tyler episode. It was on the belief that poets

can govern men by reaching their hearts, and on the purity of his motives that he based his hope of accomplishing — and checking—reform.

"By nature I am a poet, by deliberate choice, an historian, and a political writer, I know not how: by accident or course of events. Yet I think I can do something towards awakening the country, and that I can obtain the confidence of well disposed minds by writing honestly and sincerely upon things in which all persons are concerned." (Were I to accept a good berth, which is held out to me, it would very much counteract the impression which I am aiming to produce!)¹

We now may consider that Southey's political contributions were not very important. He was simply restating again and again a few favorite views. At that time, however, many of his ideas on social and economic improvement were comparatively new. Strong economic thinkers respected his opinions and considered him a leader. Lord Ashley owed him much in the agitation which led to the passage of the Factory Acts. It was Southey's failure to keep pace with reform tendencies which led to his loss of influence and the lack of praise on the collection of his political essays in 1832.

Southey did not always subscribe to all the principles of the Tory party; — he was too unwavering in his views to adapt himself to party "time serving" ²; but he steadily supported the strengthening of the central authority. The welfare of the

Established Church he considered auxiliary to that of the state, and by the authority and instruction of both, he hoped to counteract the alarming growth of popular power. He opposed the strengthening of the democratic element and advocated the suspension of habeas corpus and the limitation of the freedom of the press. Naturally he fought the reform bills. To make the lower classes more contented, more efficient citizens, he advocated, not increased political power, but improved social and economic conditions. Some of his most important proposals for relief may be considered under the heads of cooperative societies, penal and factory reform, the encouragement of emigration and colonization and - the surest, in his mind, but the slowest panacea - universal education.

Southey's fear of the people and advocacy of strengthening the hands of the government was founded on his contempt for the weakness of the ministers, who acceded to the wishes of the people. The half century of his political life furnished some of the most prominent names in English history, but the position of the English minister was full of difficulties and uncertainties. It was not till 1834 that the ministry was not subject to dismissal by royal command as well as dependent on Parliament and the people. In the early days of Southey's literary career, the position of English party leaders was especially trying. The conditions of France prepared the people to be jealous of anything like encroachment of power. On the other hand, ministers viewing the effects of mob rule, judged it wise to suppress democratic reform.
The conduct of the war involved delicate management but tended to unite the people. After it was ended, however, the English people suffered the reaction from the inflation of their war trade, the restriction of finances under the war debt, and the increase in the number of unemployed with the disbanding of the soldiers. The recent mechanical inventions had made fewer, rather than more, laborers necessary and the oversupply of factory products were bringing prices and wages down. Much of the unavoidable distress was ascribed to ministerial mismanagement. The riotous excesses of some of the labour demonstrations helped to divide the opinions of statesmen on the subject of reform. The insistent demand of the people, especially of the growing manufacturing towns, for fairer representation produced warm agitation and much parliamentary debate before the necessity of yielding became generally recognized. It was thru this concentration of attention on parliamentary reform that old party lines disappeared and the names Liberal and Conservative arose. A Conservative was Southey, and always a Tory in his loyalty to the king and the excellence of existing institutions. "The true conservatives, however, will stand manfully by the crown, even if it were on a bush (as the old Cavalier said), or where it is." ¹

Southey's attitude toward English ministers was rather peculiar. His loyalty to the state would seem weak were it judged simply by the adverse criticisms of ruling statesmen as expressed in his letters to his most intimate friends. "Why it is that there has not been a single man in Europe worthy of the

¹ To Rickman, Jan. 29, 1833. W, IV, page 326.
name (statesman) for the last century is a question which it might be of some use to consider. Burke would have been one had he not always been led away by passion and party and an Irish imagination. He gives a possible reason for the weakness of ministers in the limited opportunities of preferment open to poor men of talents. The power and representation are in the hands of the rich, and there are only two roads by which men who are not rich find their way into Parliament. Some are chosen by the minister from the University and forced for the purpose. They are too young to acquire proper information, and are flattered, conceited, and fettered by patronage. Others rise by law, but learn to disregard right and wrong. They become "pleaders and partizans but never statesmen." Again, a long period of security, when politics becomes an established trade requiring no skill, proves unfavorable to the wisdom of the government. Southey's general criticism of all ministers was that the leaders did not usurp enough power, and that a government managed by such cabinets is like an army whose whole movements are to be directed by councils of war instead of the general.

Southey writes against opposition to the ministers, and one must constantly bear in mind that he believes the people, not the government, need reforming. The minister can only prevent revolution until the people become educated and the danger is past.

Unless we remember his loyalty, his pessimism concerning the political situation seems almost revolutionary. He was sharing the fears of many thinkers in alarming indications of a bellum servile; and to his friends he frequently indulged in careless expression of his conviction that destruction was staring the country in the face, while at the same period, in public writing, he emphasized his loyalty and his confidence in the ultimate relief of unsatisfactory conditions.

Some of his privately expressed conservative views are probably of similar origin with the perfunctory predictions of a "stand pat" Republican, who expects a Democratic administration to herald national disaster. It is disappointing to have the impression of liberal, unembittered optimism, conspicuous in all other respects, marred by forecasts throughout his correspondence on the doom impending from every change of ministry and every course of action. Every situation is worse than the last and the only thing that gives him hope for England is the intervention of Providence.

For a man of his independence of character and extensiveness of acquaintance, Southey had very few violent animosities. He usually was able to consider a public character as a man apart from his success as a statesman, and while his attitude toward the former might bias his judgment in regard to the latter, he seldom nourished sustained contempt for the man (unless for rank outrage against morality). William Pitt was exceptionally odious to Southey. There is no record of the origin of the dislike. Probably Pitt's extreme repressive measures against Jacobin societies
at the beginning of the French Revolution antagonized the ardent young poet. He believed Pitt capable of inventing the attack on the king, just to secure popular support of his measures.  

Altho Southey by 1796 had realized the weakness of the French Revolution, he says he does not desire a peace of Pitt's making. "If he makes peace and keeps his place, the freedom of England is sunk below all hope - and my bones shall never rot in a soil that nourishes slaves." Pitt seemed to fill, but at that time unsatisfactorily, Southey's requirements for a strong minister. Southey heartlessly commented, "Certainly the best thing Pitt ever did was to die out of the way;" and he grieved that Fox did not die "before that wretched Pitt that he might have been spared the disgrace of pronouncing panegyric upon such a coxcombly, insolent, emptyheaded, longwinded braggadocio." It is the hard words of the above quotation that Southey's son-in-law in a note loyally excuses on the grounds of confidential intercourse. Southey could not comprehend "why the memory of Pitt should be held in such idolatrous reverence, a man who was obstinate in everything wrong as he was ready to give up anything good, and who, except in the Union and in the Scarcity, was never by accident right during his long administration."

He concedes Pitt wisdom in providing an annual budget concerning the poor laws; and he comments in his Commonplace

Book that Pitt seems "always to have spoken humanely concerning the poor." ¹ He interprets it, too, that Pitt never intended to remove existing restrictions on Catholics without substituting others. There is a concession when he writes in a personal letter in 1829 that "a man of abilities at this time might do what Pitt did at the time of the coalition, deliver king and country from a set of tergiversators." ²

However, Pitt does not appear in Southey's Vision of Judgment and Southey explains "The king would find him among the eminent men of his reign, but not among those whose rank will be confirmed by posterity." ³ There is a touch of irony in his false judgment.

Pitt's successor in the ministry, Addington, (later the Viscount Sidmouth), was rather a weak minister; but Southey approved of him because he was a Tory and would always "resist the Catholic question." In Espriella (Vol. I, pages 133-136), he devotes several pages to his praises.

Of Fox, the leader of the Ministry of All Talents in 1806, he was not very sure. He recognized his shackling with Catholic Emancipation. ⁴ He "got into good humour with his ministry because of the Limited Service Bill, the abolitionment of the Slave Trade, and their wise conduct with regard to the continent." ⁵ After Fox's death Southey says: "I am grieved at his death, sorry

¹. Vol. IV, page 700.
⁴. To Chas. Danvers, Feb. 3, '06.
that he ever came into power, and still more sorry that he has not lived long enough to prove that his intentions were as good and upright as, in my soul, I believe them to have been." ¹

This ministry resigned when the king attempted to secure a pledge not to bring up the Catholic question; but Southey's sympathy with the king on that score did not lead to his confidence in the Tory successors, Portland, Castlereagh, Eldon, Perceval, Canning, and Liverpool. ² The "convicted incapacity" of English ministers was an assumption upon which he frequently made such observations as: "Whether they can be more despised than their predecessors have uniformly and deservedly been, I know not. I can not tell how far below nothing the political barometer can sink till it has been tried." ³ Southey especially feared, during this ministry, the success of the peace party, supported by Jeffrey, in preventing the government from pressing the war with Napoleon to a brilliant close. His letters are full of this distrust of the "wretched cabinet, than which, however, no better could be found."

His interest in Spain made him especially solicitous about the effect of Napoleon's wars in Spain upon home politics (1809). Personal sympathies as well as ideas of policy made him desire that Spain should be assisted against France with all England's energy. ⁴ His interest in the peninsular countries was always alive. Little as he admired the people, he rejoiced

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in the Spanish spirit. During the internal revolutions, he advocated, as the only means of uniting the peninsula, a federal republic — much as he as an Englishman, "regarding the question as it would affect the whole of Europe (where the tendency is certainly down the hill of democracy) should grieve to see it." 1 Within this republic the governments should remain distinct. He applies his favorite theories there in holding that wise administration of old, not formulation of new governments, is the necessary relief, and that not absolute government but subversion of justice disgusted people. 2

"The single opinion in which you are likely to dissent from me is one which is derived from observation, — in opposition to my wishes, — that old despotisms can better be modified by a single will than by a popular assembly; and that in such countries as Spain and Portugal, a despotic minister (like Pombal) acting in conformity with the spirit of the age, is the reformer to be wished for." 3

Of Perceval, who was the chief of the Tory ministry from 1810 to 1812, Southey seems to have had the highest opinion — heightened by that minister’s untimely death. Among frequent expressions of praise, he states the belief that in the period of turmoil just after his death, "Perceval might have been trusted with the dictatorial power which is necessary to save the common-

wealth; he held his power as much by his virtue as by his ability. Perceval steadily opposed Catholicism and "would have bred up people in attachment to institutions."

This period of Luddite outrages and incendiary excitation was an occasion of great alarm to Southey, who sees the "most dreadful of all imaginable evils, a bellum servile" imminent. The only plank of safety is the army - altho there might be danger from it unless it be attached to the government by some boon.

Sir Francis Burdett's contempt for the majesty of the government and his championship of free speech and of parliamentary reform were too favorable to the inclinations of the mob to please a conservative Cobbett, who published the radical speeches of such men as Burdett and Hunt, seemed to Southey responsible for exciting sedition. "Abuse of liberty has uniformly been published by the loss of it." The circulation of speeches of Burdettites in the Sunday newspapers were doses of weekly poison. For relief, he advocated suspension of habeas corpus, limitation of freedom of debate and of speech, and the clearing of the galleries when agitators should rise to speak in Parliament.

Burdett, after an eventful career of defiance to ministerial authority, in which he was supported by his popularity with the lower classes, became conservative. So Southey said of him in 1837, that "he had done his full share in preparing the mischief, but no one had stood forward so manfully to stop its progress."

Southey's distrust of the Liverpool ministry ended in admiration for Lord Liverpool - on the occasion of whose death, the laureate wrote: "We have lost a right minded statesman who always discovered more knowledge and more judgment in his speeches than any other person in either house and in whom the country had, very justly, great confidence. Nothing was wanting to him but the warmth and steadiness of Mr. Perceval." 1

Castlereagh, of whom it has been said, "He was a Tory in days when most patriots were Tories; and he was a Tory of the best type," 2 secured Southey's approval because of his energetic support of Moore in the Peninsula. 3 Of the duel between Canning and Castlereagh in 1809, he says, "I do not see anything in it that concerns the public, except the gross indecency of two cabinet members fighting a duel and thereby breaking the law." 4 We are reminded of Southey's own facetious reply to an imaginary challenge in which he stipulates humorous impossible equalities of condition as being necessary for fair competition.

Southey's attitude toward Canning is not so clear. In 1800 he makes scathing comparisons on the bulldog characteristics of Mr. Wyndham and Mr. Canning. 6 He believed in 1812 that Canning and Wellington had "ratted upon the Catholic question because they expected the prince on that ground to eject Perceval, and then they should have a better chance than the Early Friends." 7

Their virtue in carrying on the war would be counteracted by Catholic Concessions. knowing Canning's more popular, less conservative attitude in a Tory ministry, we may expect Southey's disapproval. Most of his later comments on Canning, however, relate to the latter's expressed desire to serve him, and the possibility that, as men, they might have been very good friends.

Another statesman of Liverpool's age was Grenville, whom Southey had distrusted in early days and whom he characterizes as a "bad statesman who has been wrong upon every question of importance, excepting concerning the Radicals." This latter qualification was due to the fact that Grenville favored repressive legislation which more advanced Whigs opposed.

Naturally the ideas of Brougham, the leading democrat of the day, were not to Southey's taste. He rejoiced at the repeal of the Income Tax for which repeal Brougham was largely responsible; but he criticized that statesman for his campaign methods. Brougham defended Queen Caroline (1820) and Southey said she was in the "hands of a gang." He expected a Revolution!

When Brougham expressed his desire to secure Southey's cooperation in benefitting letters thru him (Southey), the poet "wrote Brougham with a thorough distrust of his intentions, a strong dislike of public conduct, a proper respect for his station, and a feeling withal that we should very well have liked each other in private life." Yet he thinks well enough of him politically to say

in the same month in which he expressed his wariness about rising
the the "statesman's bait," "We would rather have them all
against us (including Peel and the weak ministry of Grey) than
with us, except Brougham. He might do wonders if he would set his
life upon the die for the right party instead of the wrong one."  

There might be something significant in the probably un-
conscious discrepancy between his opinion of Canning, Brougham,
and Peel before and after they had offered to assist him. Cer-
tainly this is more conspicuous than any mollification over the
laureateship. Peel, of whom Southey said in 1831, "Be where he
will, he will always be distrusted," 2 obtained the promise of a
baronetcy for Southey in 1835. Southey then expresses his belief
in Peel's sincerity. 3 His later generosity to Brougham, however,
was probably due to his personal admiration for the man's ability,
and that for Peel to the latter's discovered conservatism on
reform.

Peel's credit with Southey had been lost when he became
a bullionist. 4 Coleridge and Southey together had discussed the
bullion report and "had seen its errors and dangers;" 5 and
Southey punned then of the presence of more "peel" than "pith" in
the statesman. Peel and his associate, Wellington, - the latter
whom Southey from early days had admired as a leader 6 -, were in

2. The same.
and out of power during the significant years 1828-1835. They perceived the spirit of the age and lost some of their extreme Tory conservatism. They passed a Catholic Relief Bill in 1829 which seemed inexplicable tergiversation to Southey. Their resignation, rather than permit the Reform Bill of 1832 to be carried in their ministry, restored them somewhat in his estimation. ¹ Probably had Southey foreseen that, in 1842-45, Peel would carry forward Huskisson's free trade proposals, which Southey considered so absurd, ² he might have recalled the confidence he gave him in 1835.

One of the last great political leaders upon whom Southey expressed opinions was Earl Grey, under whose ministry the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. Naturally the conservative poet disapproved of him. "Those who gave Earl Grey credit for sagacity, believed, upon his own representations that time had moderated his opinions, and that he would always support the interests of his order. Provoked at the exposure of his whole cabinet's in-capacity which their budget brought forth, he has thrown himself upon the radicals for support, bargained with O'Connell, and stirred up all the elements of revolution in this kingdom, which has never been in so perilous a state since the restoration." ³ The conclusion of this very characteristic expression of conviction that the country is on the brink of destruction is relieved by a variation of his unshaken trust in Providence. "I am most ready

¹ To Mrs. Bray, June 12, 1832. W. Vol. IV, page 282.
to conclude that we will weather the storm because all probabilities and all appearances are against it."

These are his intimate opinions of some of the great men of the delicate period of reform agitation. Southey, away at Keswick, did not fully perceive all the signs of the times and frequently imputed, with conservative impatience of compromise, the prudence of the ministers to weakness. With the exception of that toward Pitt, his attitude of criticism was rather impersonal; and while he possibly approved of the principles of a minister, he persisted in his private complaints that the country was on the brink of disaster, - not because the government was tyrannical or necessarily corrupt, - but because the people who bound the hands of the ministry and the ministers who allowed themselves to be bound, were ignorant of the true principles of government.

So in his public writings, he with all sincerity defends the ministry, - "The people', says Bishop Warburton, 'are much more reasonable in their demands on their patriots than on their minister: of their patriots, they readily accept the will for the deed: but of their ministers they unjustly interpret the deed for the will!'" - and he looks to the prosperity of the country when the ministerial will shall determine the deed.

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2. Quarterly Review, April, 1816. No.29, page 303.
CHAPTER IV
SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Southey's loyalty to the Church of England kept pace with his loyalty to the State, because he believed that the Established Church was the chief bulwark of the integrity of the English people and of the supreme authority of the government.

"From the time of the Revolution, the Church of England has partaken of the stability and security of the State — —. It has rescued us, first from heathenism, then from papal idolatry and superstition; it has saved us from temporal as well as spiritual despotism. We owe to it our moral and intellectual character as a nation: much of our private happiness, much of our public strength. Whatever would weaken it, would, in the same degree, injure the common weal; whatever should overthrow it, would, in sure and immediate consequence, bring down the goodly fabric of the constitution, whereof it is a constituent and necessary part. If the friends of the Constitution understand this as clearly as the enemies, and act upon it as consistently and as actively, then will the Church and State be safe, and with them the liberty and prosperity of our country." ¹

He believed that the state ought to concern itself with the religion of its subjects, since "religion is the only foundation of society, and governments which have not this basis are founded on sand." ² The religion of England he calls "the great charter

¹. The Book of the Church. Vol. II, page 511 (I know of no reason why the Book of the Church should be regarded as controversial except that it has excited controversy. "Excepting the concluding sentences, there is no passage but would have been written if the Catholic question had never been heard of — To Wynn, Aug. 31 '26. W. Vol. IV, page 25.
of its intellectual freedom." He would have agreed with Matthew Arnold in saying:

"The great works by which, not only in literature, art, and science generally, but in religion, the human spirit has manifested its approaches to totality and to a full harmonious perfection, and by which it stimulates and helps forward the world's general perfection, come, not from Nonconformists, but from men who either belong to establishments or have been trained in them." and with Burke in ascribing everything good to the "spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion." Southey considered the attitude of emotional loyalty which the church fosters a safeguard for the authority of the State. He was a firm believer in a Christianity which has "its root of belief in the heart rather than in the understanding - deriving from the understanding its nutriment and support." In speaking of the failure of Owen's scheme, he says:

"A degree of generous and virtuous excitement is required for overcoming the first difficulties which nothing but religious feeling can call forth." --- "Had he connected his scheme with any system of belief, tho it had been as visionary as Swedenborgianism, as fabulous as Popery, as monstrous as Catonism, as absurd as the dreams of Joanna Southcote ---or perhaps, even as cold as Unitarianism, the money would have been forthcoming."  

2. Culture and Anarchy, Preface, page XIII. (M. Arnold.)  
Like Sir Thomas Browne, he realizes that religion owes its strength to its appeal to faith. Yet of himself he says he is in more danger of having too little theopathy than too much - "of having my religious faith in the understanding rather than in the heart." The deaths of his children he interpreted as being God-sent to make him feel. In 1826, he claims there is not a spark of fanaticism left in his composition - "whatever there was of it in youth, spent itself harmlessly in political romance." 3

In 1807, Southey's loyalty to the Church was not quite in pace with his claim for the State. He says that if ever he could afford to write what he should "not think it prudent to publish it would be the Religio Poetae." 4 At that time he found much to admire in the Quakers; and in 1808 he said he was a friend to the Church Establishment because he was a "heretic requiring tolerance - an almost Quaker." 5

It is doubtful whether his attitude toward the Church was ever much more than a growing intellectual consciousness that it

1. To Rickman, Mar. 19, '06, W. Vol. I, page 371. ("There is an appetite for faith in us which if not duly indulged, it turns to green sickness, and feeds upon chalk and cinders.")
3. The Same.

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was the best to be afforded. As late as 1816, he confessed that "When Dissenters talk of the Establishment, they make me feel like a high churchman, and when I get among high churchmen, I am ready to take shelter in dissent." Yet his theological views as reported by Shelley in 1811 seem a little more extreme than any expressed elsewhere and more like those of an earlier date, when Southey was outwardly more in sympathy with Shelley.

"Southey calls himself a Christian; but he does not believe that the Evangelists were inspired; he rejects the Trinity, and thinks that Jesus Christ stands in precisely the same relation to God as himself. Yet he calls himself a Christian. Now if ever there was a definition of a Deist, I think it could never be clearer than this confession of faith." 2

The Church of England, however, seemed to Southey the golden mean where extremes meet, and by 1834 he could say that most of the people whom he had known as unbelievers thirty years before had settled into conformity with the established Church; - and their belief he knew to be sincere. 3 This experience with men of all tendencies from Unitarians whose "faith stands below zero" - to the disciples of Richards Brothers and Joanna Southcote "whose trash would raise the thermometer to the point of fever heat" led him to infer that "infidelity is usually one step in the progress of an active mind." 4

In a letter to Henry Taylor, Sept. 13, 1827, he formulates his definite opinions on the Church:

4. The same.
1. Revealed religion is true.

2. Connection between the Church and State is necessary.

3. The Church of England is the best ecclesiastical establishment which exists at present or has existed.

4. Both Church and State require amendments.

5. Both are in danger.

6. A revolution would destroy the happiness of one generation and would leave them at least worse than it found them.

The necessity of improving institutions to preserve them is strong in his mind, and, as ever, the church is auxiliary to the state.

The greatest menace to the English government, Southey found in the Roman Catholic Church. He acknowledged the virtue of many priests, and praised the civilizing influence of the Jesuit missionary, but his knowledge thru contact and study of the bigotry and superstition of the Catholics in Spain prejudiced him or awakened him to the dangers of so highly organized an influence.

"It is not her polytheism nor her mass, monstrous as they are, nor her demoralizing celibacy, nor her poisonous confession, which would then prevent us from regarding her, with all her errors, as a sister church." "It is rather the persecuting canons and persecuting saints, the Inquisition, and the intolerance in Catholic countries." 1

His earliest impressions on the Irish question show that he believed a Catholic establishment the best, or only, means of

civilizing Ireland. Even if they could not educate the Irish, bigoted priests might humanize them. ¹ He thought then that the Catholics were more to be feared in England where their monastic system was making so many proselytes. Southey changed his ideas about Ireland, however, even by 1809, and in his Colloquies, he attacks the civilizing influence of the Romish clergy. "The condition of Ireland affords full evidence for condemning them as a body. In no other country is their influence as great and in no other country are so many enormities committed." ² Much of the trouble in Ireland he traces to the confession system, whereby criminals receive absolution and priests are bound to treasonable protection of lawless communicants against discovery and prosecution by the state.

During the period of more than twenty years when Pitt was trying to relieve the Catholics from many of their disabilities, Southey agreed with the obstinate king. "Upon this subject; I suppose, Coleridge and I differ from all other friends of freedom; but I have been deeply concerned that that accursed religion can not be in the slightest degree fostered without great danger." ³ Nor did Southey ever alter his opinion even when most statesmen had realized the necessity of yielding. He wrote three articles on the subject, which appeared in the Quarterly Review in 1809, 1812, and 1828, and have since been included in his collection of essays. The first was written on the occasion of the resignation

of the Grenville ministry upon the king's attempt to exact a promise that they would not bring up the Catholic question; the second followed the renewal of agitation upon the regency of the prince; and the third, in which Southey becomes desperately warm and rhetorical, was written at the time of O'Connell's election to the Irish Parliament just before the final surrender.

Southey's arguments against granting Catholic Emancipation are comparatively simple. He believed that that step, if not dangerous, would be useless. The nature of Popery makes it impossible for Catholics to be satisfied with anything less than supremacy. The forty offices and seats in Parliament would have no appeal to the Irish did it not mean a step for the Repeal of the Act of Union and a Catholic Establishment. The Catholic already have freedom of conscience, and the troubles in Ireland are due to the land system rather than the oppression of the English Church. The spirit of vengeance in Ireland and the inherent intolerance of Catholicism and sworn hostility to the Church, would, with the possession of power, lead to persecution of Protestants and the subversion of the established government. There would be men in authority whose oaths to Rome would be contrary to their oaths of allegiance. At one period, it would have meant having men in the army acting under orders of a church controled by Bonaparte.

"It is unjust to Catholices to exclude them from situations of profit; - it would be unjust to ourselves to admit them to situations of political power. This is the distinction. Our constitution consists of Church and State: is it not, therefore, a self evident absurdity to give those persons power in the State
who are hostile to the Church?" 1

Catholic Emancipation is not a simple question of religious tolerance. No sect should ask more tolerance than it is willing to give. Catholics exclude others from the kingdom of heaven; and when they, in political control, grant freedom to Protestants, the situation is not analogous, - inasmuch as the Protestant clergy are under no obligation to a foreign power. The "abstract right" of the case is dangerous; for the general system of society is not built on equality. Everything is subject to conditions. (Again Southey parallels an idea of Burke's,) An alarming menace to Southey is the observation that Catholics are not bound by oaths to heretics; and so any oaths of security to a Protestant church would be meaningless. (This stands in contrast to views expressed in 1803, in sympathy with Emmett.2)

So instead of Emancipation, Southey would recommend; first of course, education. "Knowledge is the remedy for all moral and political ill." That is hardly to be produced by upholding and encouraging a church in which the main purpose is ever to keep its subjects in ignorance. He would advise a reasonable commutation of tithes, and would admit Catholics into every office of trust except Parliament, for which they are as unfit as a Quaker is to be an admiral. The government should cease inflaming, but be firm. It should punish all treasonable harangues, and should disfranchise the forty shilling freeholders.

Southey's opposition to Catholic Emancipation in England

2. To J. King. Sept. 28, '03. W. Vol. I, page 235. ("Had they said to him 'Promise to plot no more and you shall be free!' such a man would have been as safe under such promise as in the grave. If they mean to extirpate disaffection in I. by the gallows they must sow the whole island with hemp." )
was due to the probable destruction of the Establishment. The abolition of the Test Act would follow immediately upon the admittance of Catholics into Parliament. Then the Catholics and Dissenters together would league against the Church, and would offer the tithes as resource to some distressed ministry. Some other church could bid a cheaper establishment. Southey believed that the public would lose rather than gain from the secularization of church lands. No property is so beneficially distributed for the public good as that set apart for the provision of ministers of the altar who deserve by their learning, abilities, and character. Here again, Southey's sympathy with Burke may be traced in considering the ministry of the Established Church, a very necessary ornament to the state, which the people should glory in supporting in proper style.

Naturally the Dissenters suffered nearly as much in Southey's regard as the Catholics, in that they were almost equally dangerous to the Church Establishment. "The damned system of Calvinism spread like a pestilence among the lower classes," ¹ The notoriety of Joanna Southcote and any religious sensationalism was naturally distasteful to him, while the Unitarians, especially the more free thinking element of that sect, seemed nothing but debating clubs perniciously lacking in religion. He feared the Unitarian tendency toward the removal of all religious and political law. In spite of the deistic theories confessed to Shelley, Southey did not consider the Unitarians decorous in

advertising their tenets so freely to the common multitude. It was against the growth of the Catholic Church, the zeal of the Protestant propagandists, and worst of all, the speculative impiety which is promoting a system of unmorality,"¹ that Southey pleaded for the building of new churches according to the act of Parliament for 1818.² People are putting money into commerce rather than churches and the support of ministers, with the result that parishes are becoming too large to make the discharge of parochial duties possible. So the state, thru the church, is losing loyal supporters.

Southey was early prejudiced against the Methodists, but his alarm about danger from them gradually underwent some modification. When he was given a book on Methodism to review, in 1784, the task "excited the same sort of a smile that the thoughts of my pension does, and I wonder, like the sailor, what is to be done next."³ He announced his intention to "blow the trumpet" and turn "alarmist." I will point out the precious effects of their bands and classes, the utter ignorance of human passion on which they are founded, and the utter destruction of all morals to which they tend."⁴

Methodism seemed preparing the way for the restoration of Catholicism, thru accustoming people to the yoke of confession, the absolving power of an infallible church, and the credit in miracles. Whatever in fact in Methodism is different from the

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¹. Quarterly Review, Vol. 23, page 549- (1819)
². Quarterly Review, Vol. 23. (No. 46.)
Established Church, is to be found in the practices of the True Church." 1 Wesley's abomination of good works alone separates Methodism from Catholicism. The Establishment is endangered. Methodists keep their clergy more active than the Episcopal, and keep in closer touch with the people. The tendency toward intolerance makes this especially dangerous. Another danger lies in the probable selling of the tithes. When the government should put the clergy in the pay of the state, then the Methodists would offer the cheaper church. This offer would have some weight because the followers of Whitfield claim that theirs is the true church, adhering more strictly to the letter of the canons than even the Established Church.

Southey's work as a reviewer gave him interest and material for a life of Wesley; which was published in 1820. He comments on it in a letter to Bedford, March 26, 1820:

"For the religious public it will be too tolerant and too philosophical; for the Liberals, it will be too devotional; the Methodists will not endure any censure of their founder and their institutions; the high church man will be as little able to swallow any praise of them. Some will complain of it as being heavy and dull: others will not think it serious enough. I shall be abused on all sides, and you well know how little I shall care for it."

He was one of the first biographers to give an accurate picture of Wesley, the man, comparatively free from factional emphasis; and his treatment of him is much more flattering than one

would have imagined Southey's being capable of. Wesley's character and teachings are not to be held responsible for the schisms which excited the criticisms of the movement. Probably Southey discovered unexpected sympathy for the reformer, who had passed thru similar development from Jacobinism to opposition to revolution, and who shared his fear of a corrupted press.

He criticized the unsocial character of the Moravians and dealt with Wesley's credulity and frequent inconsistency. Of the new sect he said:

"It dealt too much in sensations, and in outward manifestations of theopathy; it made religion too much a thing of display, and affair of sympathy and confederation; it led persons too much from their homes and their closets; it imposed too many forms; it required too many professions; it exacted too many exposures. And the necessary consequence was that many, when their enthusiasm abated, became mere formalists, and kept up a pharisaical appearance of holiness, when the whole feeling had evaporated."¹

By this time, however, in his Colloquies and in his life of Wesley, he has come to have less fear from the danger of Methodism to the State. The sect is not so unpatriotic in its tenets, and, moreover, he hopes that it "can again draw towards the Establishment, from which it has receded, and deserve to be recognized as an auxiliary institution of the Church of England."² He realizes that the dissenters reach people the Church could not touch, and perhaps lead them by the step into the Establishment. He favors every concession to encourage a union with the Church

². " " " " " " " " " " " in Quarterly Review, Vol. 24, page 54-55.
and trusts from observation of tendencies that the numerous schisms would keep dissension, as a unit, weak. He sees possibilities for service from the "Church Methodist" to the Establishment in support and revivication. Methodists are superior as evangelists and parish workers. They alone can keep the cooperative societies within the pale.¹

Southey was gratified by the praise of Lord Liverpool and the Bishop of London on the value of the Life of Wesley. He considered his literary work a service perhaps greater than ministering as a clergyman would have been, and he registers the resolve, "If I live, I shall yet do good service both to the Church and the State."²

For all the ills which threaten the State, Southey prescribes education — with emphasis on religious training to attach people to all the institutions of the government. The great strength of Catholicism lies in its parochial schools, which foster knowledge and loyalty to higher institutions. He does not agree with the idea of keeping the poor in ignorance in order to insure contentment. On religious foundations, the more education the better. The human mind is to be considered similar to the earth which becomes covered with weeds if neglected. It should be cultivated, even for common fruits. Children will not be worse labourers for being taught the Bible and their Christian duties.

"Will you have the lower classes Christians or Brutes?"³

¹ To Rev. J. J. Hornby, Aug. 27, 1829. So. VI, page 61.
² To N. White, July 6, 1830. So. Vol. V, page 44.
It was the absence of any provision for instruction in loyalty to the Church of England, that gave Lancaster's system of education little favor with Southey, and caused him to prefer Dr. Bell's work - even tho Bell feared educating the poor too highly. Judging from Southey's attitude toward Lancaster, one might not realize that the latter did emphasize moral instruction - tho not sectarian. In 1812, Southey considered the Church especially weak for leaders. In Bell's system he saw hope, providing the higher clergymen were sufficiently alarmed by Lancaster's popularity. He felt especial interest in this controversy, on which he writes an article for the Quarterly Review (later republished separately). We feel in his comment on the two men to his friend White, that he is yielding to a tendency to lose the men in their work. With Lancaster he is very severe, calling him a "vulgar minded plagiarist, and a liar of the foulest kind. The good which he has done is very great, but it is pretty much the way the devil has been the cause of Redemption." 1 "As for Dr. Bell, he has been and is, as much an enthusiast in this pursuit as Clarkson has been respecting the slave trade, and is to me, who know both the men, not less an object of respect and reverence." 2 Southey always preserved this respect for Dr. Bell, and, on the death of the older man, accepted the task of editing his works - unaccompained as it was by the expected bequest.

He further expresses his views on religion and education in this letter:

"The new system on the Lancastrian scheme must needs

to operate to undermine the Church Establishment. It is really a self evident absurdity to affirm that it is not the duty of the State to see that national education be conducted upon the principles of national religion. Do not misunderstand me; my meaning is, that in parochial schools, which I want to see established at the public expense over all England, the Church catechism ought to be taught and no substitute for it; because this is known and approved, and what may be substituted we know not, and we do know that nothing can be devised more conformable to the doctrines of the Church of England."

Southey's interest in improved educational systems was due partly to his dissatisfaction with his own school life. He could sympathize with Cowper in having been bullied; and so he lamented the total disregard, then, and still, of the "most momentous part of education, that of moral discipline." ¹ He regrets the absence of just enough superintendence of dormitories to end the tyranny of older boys and the lack of opportunity in the school dormitory, for solitary prayer.²

"Such schools as his are unfavorable to devotional feelings and destructive to devotional habits; that nothing which is not intentionally profane, can be more irreligious than the forms of worship which are observed there; and that at no time has a school boy's life afforded any encouragement, any inducement, or any opportunity for devotion." ³

In 1793, he said: "Never shall son of mine enter a public school or university. Perhaps I may not be able so well to instruct him in logic or languages, but I can at least preserve him from vice." ¹ He did undertake the early education of his children, and consequently Cuthbert's knowledge of foreign languages was appreciative rather than exact. Southey seems never to have planned, however, that his son should not go to college. He realizes that, under the present circumstances, "a man feels his deficiency without it" — even tho as late as 1816, he declares "I am not sure there would be either schools or universities in a Utopia of my creation." ²

Religious education was indeed Southey's panacea for all ills. He frequently extolled the work of missionaries and agitated their need in colonial possessions. His constant emphasis on conversion as a matter of policy for the strengthening of the government may be illustrated by the tone of the following advice to his brother, for an essay on the civilization of the Hindus, thru interest:

"Soldiers are the worst missionaries, — priests indispensible, but not the best, — the civil government should be the great agent. Admit a converted Hindoo to the privilege of and Englishman, and the whole system will crumble like snow in the sunshine. Never mind his sincerity, for you can make sure of his children." ³

To Southey, we must feel, religion was an institution, somewhat hallowed by tradition, to be sure, but something which must make its value evident to everyone in the perception that outward uniformity is the only logical course, and entirely the proper thing for the good of Society and the State.
CHAPTER V
OPPOSITION TO DEMOCRATIC TENDENCIES

The only question upon which Lord Grenville was ever right (that is agreed with Southey) was that of repressive legislation.\(^1\) Southey saw disaster to the state in any addition to the power of the ignorant mob, and so naturally opposed the agitation for parliamentary reform; and he would have curbed the ambition and consciousness of strength of democratic agitators by frequent suspensions of the habeas corpus and by restrictions on the freedom of the press.

His opposition to parliamentary reform was never abated. In 1810 he discussed Sir Francis Burdett's plan, and in 1816 wrote a long essay in the Quarterly Review. Then he indulged in gloomy forebodings after the passage of the Act of 1832. To him the plans for the abolition of influence at elections and for the abolition of pensions and sinecures seemed useless or pernicious. The main evil in the government is "not in the state of representation, but in want of an efficient head."\(^2\) "The government can do little to create or cure present conditions." The situation might have been improved only by a more gradual transition from war to peace. The revision of the poor laws might help some ultimately; but a reformed House of Commons can offer no more relief to distress than the other could. Any plan of relief will ultimately resolve itself into taxation; and people will be ready

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to stigmatize as corruption any proposal offered. According to Southey, Government and Parliament can not charm away the privations of the poor; but they must save rich and poor from Revolution.¹ Reforms were best turned from government to society in correcting social and economic conditions.

Ultraconservative are those ideas of Rickman's (Rickman wrote most of Southey's essay on Economical Reformers and passages of similar theme in others) to which Southey subscribed and in which were defended the much deplored existing conditions. He said that the members who have purchased seats in Parliament or who hold them thru the favor of a landowner, are quite as honorably independent as those who are returned by the mob and are dependent on them. In fact, he would have the seats bought openly and would apply the money to a fund for public works.² He recognized the justice of extending representation to towns which had none, but he would preserve property qualifications to disqualify the "mere mob." It seemed obvious to him that representation should be based on property and not on "mere numbers," and that neither house of Parliament should become so large that it would deteriorate into a "popular assembly." Popular elections would bring mob rule. An extension of the suffrage would fill the House of Commons with men of a very different type; who would subvert the government. They, naturally, would not agree with the ministry and would oppose them at every turn. This blocking by the opposition party during the war had brought disaster to the nation.

As to election conditions, order at the hustings might be improved, but there would still be seditious electioneering beforehand.

Sinecures, he considered a very necessary recompense. Rickman calls a sinecure a "prize in an official state lottery," "the most frugal mode of tempting men of talents into the service of the state." Like Burke, he appeals to the pride people should take in supporting their statesmen. The abolition of fees of office, too, is not desirable. Most public service is inadequately repaid, and better officials can be obtained if they have the liberty of accepting payment for overtime accommodations. Southey disapproves of the new system in public offices of promotion according to merit rather than seniority. To him the reform is unjust and permits even more patronage than the old.

Public opinion in Southey's mind had already attained all the influence compatible with public safety in the publication of parliamentary debates. "The more loudly and confidently Public Opinion is expressed, with the more reason ought it always be distrusted! The more powerful it becomes, the more easily is it misled, and the more are its predominance and its tyranny to be dreaded." Hence not only should the mob have no opportunity of expressing radical opinions on the floor of Parliament, but all seditious speech and writing should be rigorously punished. He advised the frequent suspension of habeas corpus in cases of

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mob agitators and regretted that the law moved so slowly or re-
leased seditious suspects for lack of evidence.

"Of all the engines of mischief which were ever yet em-
ployed for the destruction of mankind, the press is the most
formidable, when perverted in its uses as it was by the Revolu-
tionists in France, and is at this time by the Revolutionists in
England." 1 Southey considered the control of the press the most
important of all English reforms. There would be no time for the
operation of any of the palliations or alternatives of evil con-
ditions unless the license of the circulating newspapers and
magazines were checked. 2

The abuse of liberty must always be accompanied by the
loss of it. Altho countries without the wholesome influence of
the press tend to despotism and the degradation of mankind, in
England "The freedom of the press is incompatible with public
security." 3 He foresees no security for the government or
society until constituted authorities all over Europe control the
press. So great is the importance of the subject in his eyes
that he says characteristically that the only corrective would be
war or pestilence. "It is a frightful thought, but it has occurred
to me who believe in the moral government of the world - (and it
has made an impression upon me) that Providence may send pesti-
ence among us, at once to punish us and to preserve us from the
only evil that would be greater." 4

Danger from the press had never before been so great. Prior to this reign, the circulation of political writings had been slight. England had not learned to talk of "the reading public". Now in the alehouses and on all sides that public encounters the seditious inflammatory writing of Cobbett and his ilk. Libel is prevalent among all parties, but of course, especially among those who are directing their strongest appeal to the ignorant. The impression of seditious writing cannot be easily counteracted. "A staunch ministerialist (or many a subject) believes everything which his newspaper tells him, and takes his information and his opinions with the utmost confidence from a paragraph writer who is paid for falsifying the one and misleading the other." 1 The public frequently fails to recognize that a review is the work of but one man, and to see that the critical reviews are tinged by politics. Southey realized from his own work in the Quarterly Review what modern biographers are just beginning to appreciate, that for unbiased contemporary estimates even of pure literature, some of the smaller magazines are more trustworthy than the Edinburgh Review and its imitators and rivals.

Whether justified or not in his fear of the corruption of public opinion, it was natural for Southey in his conservatism to say:

"God help the simple understandings of men who suppose —— that the fear of the mob is the beginning of wisdom in government! And God forgive the deliberate guilt of those who perseveringly endeavor to make the mob sensible of their strength and breathe into them their own spirit of envy, hatred,
malice, and all uncharitableness." 1

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CHAPTER VI
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM

"Let us not deceive ourselves! Governments are safe in proportion as the great body of people are contented, and men cannot be contented when they work with the prospect of want and pauperism before their eyes, as what must be their destiny at last." 1

"The primary consideration in all the social and economic reforms suggested by Southey was the welfare of the state, not any truly democratic impulse. He did not feel for the poverty and ignorance of the lower classes a burning sense of outrage against social and political injustice to individual rights and universal equality; but he saw in this inequality a menace to the power of the state. Not that Southey was heartless. His early poems contain ardent sentiments of brotherhood; but we feel that in his mature life there was an aristocratic aversion to viewing suffering rather than any desire to put himself or his friends into a relationship of common sympathy with lower classes. He would have agreed with Burke: "Those who attempt to level never equalize." His generous impulses permitted his sympathies to be enlisted easily in behalf of struggling poets. Many young writers were assisted; and other families, beside that of Chatterton, profited by his benefit editions of deceased poet's works. 3 Yet we find no evidences in his letters of his issuing from his library

to bridge personally the chasm between ordinary man and man. The tone of this passage from a letter to John Rickman is that of all his references:

"I incline to think there will come a time when public opinion will no more tolerate the extreme of poverty in a large class of the community than it now tolerates slavery in Europe. Meantime it is perfectly clear that the more we can improve the condition of the lower classes, the greater number of customers we procure for the home market; and that if we can make people pay taxes instead of claiming poor rates, the wealth, as well as the security, of the state is increased." 1

Of course, many of the most impassioned discoursers, on the brotherhood of man never went beyond literary abstraction, and neglected to introduce the personal element. Democratic and deistic theories, in this respect, failed of the spiritual dynamic of Christian ideals. Southey was really among the first to make as practical application as he did of general democratic principles; but there is as much difference between his politic social reform and that of the true modern Brother of Man, as there is between the farmer who guards carefully the condition of his stock in order to increase their efficiency or to spare himself annoyance in their ill appearance, and the animal lover whose every sensibility is distressed by the suffering of fellow creatures.

With such a spirit Southey advocated reforms which should make for the contentment and loyalty of the lower orders of

society. The tone and items of his summarized proposals of Irish relief are practically those he applied to English conditions.

"This is a straight road - to restrain treason, to punish sedition, to disregard clamour; and by every possible means to better the condition of the Irish peasantry, who are not more miserably ignorant than they are miserably oppressed. Give them employment in public works - bring the bogs into cultivation - facilitate for those who desire it the means of emigration. Extend the poor laws to Ireland - experience may teach us how to guard against their abuse; - they are benevolent, they are necessary, they are just. Lay the impost in such a proportion upon the absentees as may, in some degree, compensate for their non-residence. - Introduce the poor laws, and the land holders will heartily cooperate in bettering the condition of the poor, and in removing any surplus population. Better their condition thus: educate the people; execute justice and maintain peace; - and Catholic Emancipation will then become as vain and feeble a cry in Ireland as Parliamentary Reform has become in England."

(Perhaps had his plans carried, both these measures would have been as feeble as he wished to think them.)

The distress of the poor of England compelled the attention of everyone, and the discontent expressed in Luddite riots and similar demonstrations caused less conservative men than Southey, to doubt the advisability of giving lower classes more power. He considered the cause economic, rather than political, and recommended relief in kind. Most of the poor population was concentrated in manufacturing centers. The thinning of estates,

especially in Scotland and Ireland, had ceased to give land and labor to many peasants. These had crowded the cities and the rapidly growing manufacturing towns, but had furnished an oversupply of labor at a time when improvements of machinery demanded fewer operators. To aggravate the situation, cheap Irish laborers were imported every season to compete with the many native poor. England had not realized conditions, until, after the peace, the recovering continent ceased to give England a monopoly of manufactured products, and the disbanded soldiers swelled the ranks of unemployed. This excess of supply of products over demand, accompanying an excess of labor, brought the price of products and so the price of labor down to almost less than a living wage. The small shop keepers, also, suffered because of too much competition. Surplus goods were peddled around the country at sacrifice prices. Then in order to sell goods regularly as cheaply, the quality was deteriorated. All this wrought hardship on the people, who became ill able to bear the increased war tax.

Different causes were offered for the unfortunate conditions. Sir Francis Burdett attributed them to boroughmongers and Malthus to the system of nature by which population increased out of proportion to food. Southey, who discussed the situation of the poor frequently in the Quarterly Review, the Colloquies, and Espriella, said that "The steam engine alone, without war, and without that increased taxation war has rendered necessary, would have produced the distress which our manufacturing population has experienced, and is likely again and again to experience." 1

Of course Southey believed most men would realize that, while a necessary evil, improvement in manufactures was ultimately good; and he reminded them that the "spirit of trade gave men and means for the recent war."

The danger from poverty among factory labourers is especially great. The agricultural communities are distressed because of the poor regulation of wages, but the poor there are subject to the softening influence of country or village life. The manufacturing class, on the other hand, have no religion and no local attachments. The old feudal respect for employer is replaced, in the factory system, by envy. The manufacturing poor feel the whole burden of taxation. They do not raise any portion of their food, and any drain on their bare living wage reduces them to actual want. This discontent is very easily stimulated by political faction. These men know more of politics than their country brothers. Their superior interest is dangerous because of their imperfect information and their consciousness of numbers. They are very impressionable under the pernicious influence of anarchist writings in the newspapers. Luddite agitators take advantage of the laborers' frequenting the ale houses. This was one of the conditions which Southey considered in advocating the reform of regulations governing public houses.

"Manufactures are favorable to population," and such a large mass of people, thus discontented, ignorant, conscious of numbers, and accustomed to lower standards of living give cause for fear. There is to be found a lack of decency or comfort in
life in factory districts, and "it is not the least evil of the system that they are perfectly well satisfied to be poisoned soul and body." 1 There is no hope among them, and to Southey that meant everything. "Hope is the 'preserving principle' of individuals and social bodies." 2 Hope is as essential to prudence and to virtue, as to happiness." 3

One of the abuses of the factory system which appealed to Southey's personal sympathies was the corruption of domestic life. Whole families labor the greater part of the twenty-four hours. Children enter the factory as infants and have no opportunity of learning the arts of home making or citizenship. The following artistic passage contributes much to our understanding of Southey's attitude toward child labor:

"When he reflects upon the condition of these most forlorn and pitiable of his species (chimney sweeps), and upon the far greater number who are working at unwholesome occupations in hot and offensive rooms, debarred the natural enjoyments which childhood instinctively requires, deprived of fresh air, destitute of all moral, intellectual, and religious education, and habituated from their earliest years to whatever can corrupt the imagination and defile the heart - with what feelings will a Christian call to mind the words of his Lord and Redeemer - 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven!' It is not in respect to his

1. Ibid, Vol. II, ch. 36
Creator alone that man is as clay in the potter's hands; human institutions make the difference between the Englishman and the savage." ¹

For the relief of the condition of the poor, Southey proposed reforms which would make people independent and self-respecting. Most of the usual forms of relief he considered temporary and inefficient, and would use them only during the slower process of education to providence, loyalty, justice, and true knowledge of economical and political principles. The trouble is not in the government, and more good is to be done by individuals than by Parliament. "The people individually are cheating the people collectively." ² The country is full of abuses from "bottom to top." The first thing is to change the morals of the public.

Yet Southey did not believe that the government should leave the situation alone. "'Laissez nous faire!' But this is what no government can safely afford to do. No government can rely enough upon the virtue, the common honesty, or the commonsense of its subjects to do it." ³

The poor laws of England during the early part of the Nineteenth Century were very unsatisfactory. It was estimated that one tenth of the whole population received charity. Southey realized, more than the expense of relief, the danger to the country of habituating a large class to pauperism. In charities

¹. Quarterly Review, Apr.'16, No. 29, page 224.
and education, the old Catholic monastic systems had been better. When charity, instead of being a religious duty, becomes an affair of law, the influence is more degrading. The relief often amounts to a subsidy paid by the parish to fill out inadequate wages; but the moral results are deplorable. Where indoor relief is given the disgrace and degradation of the mingling of the unfortunate, the defective, and the criminal contaminates great masses of English society. An economic loss is the prohibition of the free circulation of laborers, as brought about by the desire of each parish not to allow more possible applicants for charity to be added to its poor list. The administration of funds before the Reform involved abuses at the hands of the overseers - who might be parsimonious or dishonest. Worst of all, the rates lay such a heavy tax upon the self supporting laborer that he is unable to save anything, and so he, too, in his old age is reduced to accepting charity. When men can have no expectation but that they will some time become objects of charity, - self respect, moral strength, and the finest attributes of that class which should be a "country's pride" dies within them. So Southey laments the existing conditions of poor relief and says:

"The system which produces the happiest moral effects will be found also most beneficial to the interest of the individual and the general weal: upon this basis the science of political economy will rest at last, when the ponderous volumes with which it has been overlaid shall have sunk by their own weight into the dead sea of oblivion." ¹

Many of Southey's ideas on the condition of the poor are similar to those set forth by Malthus; but the moral implications of Malthus' Essay on Population aroused the sentimental conservative so that he considered the destruction of the book his mission. Both favored the abolition of poor rates, but Southey considered the plan of a reporting commission to abolish the poor rates all at once, in ten years, objectionable. He thought there would be less danger of an insurrection if the assessment were lessened gradually. Yet, for Ireland, he considered the poor laws "benevolent," "necessary," - probably better than nothing.

To make possible the lessening of poor assessments, Southey advocated, as most important of all, the education of the people - and of course that education should be religious. He desired some provision for the education of children working in factories. The lower classes, instructed in their duties and understanding their own interests, would be provident.

To encourage providence he favored the work of benefit societies and of savings banks. The latter, however, should be subject to government supervision. He recommended the establishment of country banks connected with the National Bank to protect the poor against disasters from failing provincial banks.

Similar benefit did he expect to be derived from the cooperative societies, the fruit of Robert Owen's ideas. They were comparatively new in the early nineteenth century, and Southey believed them a foundation on which the political economy of the future might rest. In 1829, he visited an association at Brighton, where a community was concerned in common business enterprises;
and he described it to Rickman. The latter became interested and made plans of his own. The trace of Pantisocratic ideas still lingered with Southey, and he said of his friend's plans, that he might find his own work in this field if he had time to develop the ideas with which his brain had been busy. The cooperative scheme, however, disappointed its supporters; dangerous socialistic opinions very naturally developed; and Southey, seeing the tendency, qualified his support.

He would have applied something of the cooperative method to rural conditions by enabling the peasants to keep stock of their own and by desiring for them as much interest in the land they cultivated as possible. He advised landowners to divide their estates into smaller farms, rather than to pay the heavier poor tax resulting from lack of employment.

In further consideration of the agricultural classes he advocated a reformation in the game laws to secure justice to the farmer who feeds game, and to remove the high premium put upon poaching by the demand and sale of game killed without the law.

Southey did not ignore the condition of women in considering the means of improving the social order. He became interested in a plan whose object was "to provide for the numerous class of women who want employment, the means of respectable independence by restoring to them those branches of business, which men have mischievously usurped, or monopolized, when they ought only to have shared." A very gallant equal suffrage speech

does this seem; but the following expression of his attitude, then (1800) shows his guiding thought in recommending Beguinages:

"You like women better than I do; therefore I think it likely that you may take as much trouble to benefit the sex, as I to benefit the community by their means." 1

His ideas on Beguinages were derived from his observations of female fraternities of that name in Holland and Flanders. 2 He traces their origin to the union for safety of women made independent by the crusades, into orders bound by no vows or austerities. He agreed with Rickman in the need of religious unity, perhaps some uniformity and a secured income for each female to secure respectability. 3 (Note this is not pauper aid.) By such organizations he thought to provide for the great number of lonely women, to furnish education to girls, and, most important of all, to supply the lack in the State Church of "sisters of charity." Especially in hospitals did England need devoted women. He believed Mary Wollstonecraft would have recommended his scheme. He realized its idealism, but thought that some wealthy people might consider it fashionable to promote it.

"Our difficulty, I fear will be in acquiring for the establishment that respectability which religion gave it in Catholic countries; this will be the first obstacle in filling the establishment, but it can only exist at first." 4

That obstacle, however, was not overcome. In 1830, he writes of the formation of a society at Liverpool which should offer a

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3. Rickman to Southey, Feb. 20, 1820
home and instruction to nurses and would approach the state of
the Beguines. 1

The plan of Lady Isabella King for Ladies Associations,
discussed in the Colloquies, was of a similar nature. He noted
the number of unmarried women, resulting partly from the economic
necessity of late marriages among the middle classes. He would
provide a home for women of three groups: the wealthy, the middle
class, who should pay only £50 to the home, and the poor, who
should earn a salary while working there. To these institutions,
female education was to be gradually transferred. There should
be no habit and few regulations. He did not wish to institution-
alize the associations. He knew that eleemosynary institutions
were not very successful and held that more could be done, with
the same amount of money and less loss of self respect, in pensions.

Another plan was that for a Convalescent Asylum in which
he was interested with John May and Carlyle. He had observed
the destitution of persons discharged from the hospital before
they were able to do arduous work, and he perceived the possible
relief to individuals and society in supplying proper conditions
for the convalescents. This institution was to be made self-
supporting. The guests were to be employed in raising garden
produce in the summer and, in winter making baskets, nets, sheets,
etc. Six hours' work was to be required of the strongest and extra
pay was to be given for extra hours. For the furtherance of this
plan, too, Southey was to depend on persons of more wealth and in-

1. To Rev. N. White, Jan. 10, 1830.
fluence than he; and so it remained but a plan.¹

Next to education, Southey's favorite and most practicable plan for the amelioration of mankind was that of encouraging emigration and colonization. With so much of the English possessions uncultivated, want from overpopulation seemed ridiculous. He wondered that people did not appreciate that "it is as necessary for a flourishing country to send out colonies as for a hive to send out swarms." ²

"O! what a country might this England become did its government but wisely direct the strength, and wealth and activity of the people! Every profession, every trade is overstocked; there are more adventurers in each than can possibly find employment; hence poverty and crime. Do not misunderstand me as asserting this to be the sole cause, but it is the most frequent one. A system of colonization that should offer an outlet for the superfluous activity of the country would convert this into a cause of general good; and the blessings of civil- ization might be extended over the deserts that, to the disgrace of man, occupy so great a part of the world! Assuredly poverty and the dread of poverty are the great sources of guilt --- That country can not be well regulated where marriage is imprudence where children are a burthen and a misfortune." ³

This plea of the "metapoliticians" of overpopulation irritated Southey. Carlyle and he had similar contempt for the

science of political economy.¹ Malthus, with his emphasis on the imperfectibility of society because of the misery always to accompany the tendency of population to increase faster than food supply, — and the agreeable corollary to the wealthy, 'that poverty is the fault of the poor and that poor relief is pernicious — was odious to him. Moral considerations are allowed no place in their philosophy — how much less then should religion be found there.'² "Take the brains of the whole school, and distil them in vacuo, and you would not extract so much essential thought as may be found in any one page of our old divines."³ (Scotchey evidently was not one of those dazzled by the apparent originality of Malthus' essay.) He computes that one sixth of England and a larger proportion of the rest of the British Isles is at this time uncultivated, and there are tracts of habitable land in the colonies equal to the whole surface of Europe. Yet writers talk of surplus population, and "instead of sending out swarms would starve the bees to keep them from breeding."⁴

There are opportunities for relief in the colonization of England itself. Much of the waste land, by organized labor, might be put under cultivation. An attempt to settle disbanded soldiers on forfeited estates in Scotland had failed because of the difficulties of direction. Military discipline should have been preserved. There are many national improvements, beside the reclamation of land, on which bands of laborers may be employed.

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4. The same.
monuments, roads, foot paths, etc. would furnish employment; and the government would do well not to economize so closely after the war as to consider this expenditure extravagance.

Southey had decided ideas on colonization in the British possessions. He regretted that there were fewer emigrants of the higher and middle ranks, and that they were not properly established by the presence of more women. The discontented adventurers who fought in the European wars are hard to dispose of. Some, to the disgrace of England, after their discharge, become mercenaries in South America. Others colonize. As a rule the emigrants to the colonies go seeking wealth, with no appreciation of the superior moral advantages of a new country. This materialistic motive, the large convict class, the presence of but few churches, and the existence of slavery make moral conditions in the colonies bad. Government promotion of colonization had not been very successful. In Canada, an establishment had corrected the weakness of the Scotch colony and had been governed by a military system. It failed, however, because the men really did not know how to work. Then many emigrants took advantage of the payment of their passage to Canada to go across to the United States and so swell its population, in case of war, against England. He recommended a close contract in which the government should cooperate with colonists in land and passage money so that the interest and good faith of the colonist should be insured in his obligations to repay part of it. Southey’s summary statement of his notions of colonial policy in 1812 were practically those of the imperial policy which England has been
working out ever since.

"With the Cape and New Holland, for instance, I would proceed thus: 'govern yourselves, and we will protect you as long as you need protection: when that is no longer necessary remember, that tho' we be different countries, each independent, we are one people. Every Briton who sets foot among you shall instantly be entitled to all the privileges of a native: every person born among you becomes an Englishman when he lands in Great Britain. Every country in which England is the mother tongue shall be open to every member of the great English race.' In fifty years American would petition to be received back into the family."  

Closely allied to the problems of encouraging voluntary emigration were those of the deportation of criminals. His Botany Bay Eclogues are rather peculiar records of English political and social injustice, and the contrasting mildness and comfort of colonial life when

"Tried and condemned, His Majesty transports me
And here in peace, I thank him, he supports me."  

Naturally to Southey's high ideals of colonial life, convicts did not seem the best colonists, but his aversion to other severe punishments left this the best that could be offered. He would, however, send new convicts to new settlements and give the old ones a chance to purify.  

He advocated colonizing with forgers, a better class of criminals, for whom transportation seemed a

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3. To Wynn, 1805. So. Vol. II, page 347,
fitter punishment than death. He favored deportation of more of the women criminals.

Southey especially bewailed the prevalence of the death penalty for crimes of varying degrees. In 1818 he soberly restated in "To me it has long appeared a safe proposition that the punishment of death is misapplied whenever the general feeling that it creates is that of compassion for the criminal" 1 - the conviction that he expressed in Wat Tyler in 1794:-

"Justice can never link with cruelty,
Is there, among the catalogue of crimes,
A sin so black that death alone can expiate?
Will reason never rouse her from her slumbers,
And, darting thru the veil her eagle eye,
See in the sable garments of the law,
Revenge concealed?" 2

Death for forgery seems unfair because the penalty is not suited to the crime; and various degrees of wrong in it are ignored. Espriella 3 considers that the amputation of the thumb fits this sin. Since in the English system, to insure prevention crimes are punished, not according to the degree of moral guilt, but according to the facility with which they might be committed, he advises bank directors to lessen the temptation to sin by making forgery more difficult. In all punishment government should consider a reform of causes and temptations.

Imprisonment of debtors in England stands out in contrast

to the superior provision of Spain for bankruptcy courts, which, however, in their mismanagement, were absurd. 1 The use of the pillory and the nature of the suicide laws also seemed subjects for correction.

While he is advocating the mitigation of the severity of penalties, he is advising reforms of the Jury system. He believes the juries are going too far. He proposes restoring punishment for a false verdict. He wishes the Whigs in power because of their "certain interference with the press, and the probability of their undoing the mischief which Fox did by making the jury in cases of libel judges of the law as well as the fact." 2 He sees that too much attention is paid to technicalities, that there are too many loopholes for escape. Again, too much time elapses between the crime and the trial so that, in such a case as that of Home, the defendant had a chance to get up a theatric defense, and the people to cool. 3

Prison conditions were subject for reform. Since persons are innocent till they are proved guilty, there should be no unnecessary rigor while they wait for trial. When his innocence is proved, the prisoner ought to be indemnified for his losses; where guilty the costs should fall on the public, not on the prosecutor. The prisoners should be separated according to their offenses. No gambling or sports should be allowed to make punishment sweet. (Note this departure from modern American prison

2. To Rickman, Sept. 1, 1818. W. Vol. III.
3. The same.
policy.) The prisoners, however, should be encouraged and provided with instruction; — altho little can be accomplished by Methodists visiting the condemned. A portion of their earnings should be reserved for them upon their release.

Many of these abuses criticized were already mitigated by custom, but he wished them to be definitely corrected. His annoyance on the failure of statesmen to carry out such reforms till compelled has ironical application, when we consider how unwilling Southey himself was, in some matters, to give in to public opinion.

"It is a strange folly, a fatality that men in power will not see the prudence of anticipating public feeling sometimes and doing things with a grace for the sake of popularity, which must be done with ignominy upon compulsion." 1

Naturally Southey was opposed to slavery and the slave trade. He cultivated the friendship of Clarkson, and of Wilberforce; and upon Grenville's installation, eulogized him in verse for his abolition service. (1810.) This may be one of those poems on the slave trade "which have gone some way toward avenging the poor African by the boredom if not anguish which they inflicted on the white brethren of his oppressors." 2

His attitude toward the negro was not alone humanitarian. In his third sonnet, of the period of Wat Tyler, he indulges in the enthusiastic romanticism of

"I praise thee, Gracious God,

That I do feel upon my cheek the glow

Of indignation, when beneath the rod
A sable brother writhe's in silent woe."

But in 1803 we find him interested in working out a thesis on the nature of the negro race:

"Can you get for me evidence upon the Slave Trade as printed for the House of Commons? I want to collect all materials for speculating upon the negroes. That they are a fallen people is certain, because being savages, they have among them the forms of civilization." ¹

"The state of society in negro land puzzles me. We read of cities, and courts, and palaces, and kings, — and kings they are to all intents and purposes; yet when we think of one of these King Toms, with a captain's old coat, a pair of Monmouth Street red breeches, a tye wig, playing with his brass buttons, or with a rattle, one wonders how the devil they came by the forms of a regular government. They look to me like a degraded race, as if they had been civilized once, and had sunk into the dotage, the second childhood, of society." ²

He calls cities of North Africa "groups of negro sties."

Of the people of San Domingo, he says: "God forbid that ever English hand be raised against the negroes in that island. Poor wretches, I regard them as I do the hurricane and the pestilence, blind instruments of righteous retribution and divine justice; and sure I am that whatever hand be lifted against them will be withered." ³

With deterministic attitude toward slavery, he

justifies God's permission of its existence, but can see no excuse for man's suffering it. 1

Above his aloof humanitarianism and scholarly interest, ever ascends his primary consideration of the permanency of the social order. The West Indian situation interested him beyond the romantic appeal in Toussaînt L'Oberture. He realizes that Hispaniola was not meant for white men, or else they could work there. Since, ultimately, it must belong to the race whose constitution is suited to the climate, it is very necessary that steps should be taken toward civilizing the natives, lest scenes of massacres lead to the establishment of negro states. 2 Such was his interest in 1804 that he said if he were single and a Frenchman, he, himself, would go as a missionary to San Domingo. 3

The following note on his idea of the importance of the influence of slavery contains also an interesting comment on his ideas on the United States:

"It is evident to me that the Anglo-Americans separated from the parent state at least a century too soon. They became independent before they had a race of scholars or of gentlemen among them. Their independence is not yet thirty years old, and see what a national character they have obtained and deserved. But the Spanish Americans are even less fitted to form a new state for they are far more ignorant, and the morals of the worst part of the United States (South) are less depraved than those of the best

parts of Spanish America; but the one main cause of the inevitable depravity exists in both — the practice of slavery." ¹

Seeing a tendency in all revolutions to result in military despotism, and yet considering the army the only plank to rescue the country from bellum servile, Southey appreciated the importance of attaching the army to the government by every reform of existing evils possible. He would give the soldier greater attachment and ambition in the profession by limiting the service to seven year periods, and providing for honorary rewards, graduated pay, and pensions upon retirement, after twenty-one years of service.

His strongest remonstrance was against the custom of punishment by flogging: "English martial laws are the most barbarous in Europe." ² Instead of flogging, he would substitute for most offenses, forfeiture of time. ³

All these reforms would tend to strengthen the forces of national defense, but he would make recruiting still easier by the establishment of military education. Naval seminaries should be provided for pauper boys, thus solving, profitably to the state the problem of their maintenance and their future career. He would extend military training to schoolboys. Despite his protests in early poems against the state's compelling man to kill man, the ideal of universal peace as a practical proposition was too radical for Southey. He preferred to believe that every evil was part of God's plan for good, and that war was a corrective of other ills.

³ Essays, Vol. I.
Lastly, soldiers would not be so reluctant to join the army, if they knew that, in peace, they would not be suddenly turned out upon the world without work. He dwelt much on this ingratitude and advocated the advantage of employing disbanded soldiers in time of peace on public works. The lack of wisdom and foresight expressed by the government in presuming to relieve the condition of the poor by retrenching public expenditure seems very reprehensible to Southey. The country was never so prosperous as during the war; and the burden of heavier taxation would be of less force than the relief offered to the needy of greater opportunities for employment. Not only were they to be employed on projects of direct economic value, (reclamation etc.); but public monuments, in their demand for laborers and in their appeal to the loyalty of the English people, were by no means an extravagance. An additional merit of the plan for providing for soldiers in peace lay in the opportunity it offered them for domestic life; - which was no small element in promoting social reform.

These are the most important of Southey's social and economic reform ideas. We see that outside of political conditions, he considered very broad and varied corrections to make the most dangerous classes contented and attached to the government.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

The life of Southey, in any phase, forms an engrossing study. It is impossible for anyone to read his letters without becoming impressed with the charm of that vital personality which gave so many contemporaries material for lofty praise of him. Yet his character was by no means perfect: he was very human; and any study of him must owe its strength to the author's success in reconciling Southey's upright, conscientious attitude toward every interest of his life with his frequently fallible judgment.

The examination of Southey's political ideas has offered interesting light on the reaction of many Englishmen toward the French Revolution and its democratic principles and on the attitude, in the early nineteenth century, toward English reform. It has afforded, in Southey, a typical portrait of the scholar who feels it his duty to devote his talents to his country, and thinks to excel equally as a scholarly recluse and as a leader in practical political thought.

It has not been the purpose of this thesis to show that Southey's political ideas were irreproachable, but rather to determine what the most constant principles of his thought were and to discover, by a careful and sympathetic study of his own private and public statements, whether he was guilty of any morally culpable self contradiction that would justify our attaching great opprobrium to the epithets "renegade" and "turncoat" applied to him by adverse critics.
That Southey did change his ideas about the possibilities of the French Revolution is certain: that he altered them as soon as he did indicates that he perceived, not the incorrectness of his ideals of a better social order, but the impossibility of realizing them in revolutionary methods. His consistently independent character makes the charge that he changed for mercenary reasons a thesis unworthy of consideration.

We discover little support for tracing, as fundamentally predominant, his early democratic tendencies thru a later period, and for supposing them to be overlaid by Tory principles of time serving policy. We find, rather, as we survey the whole field, that we must work on the thesis that Southey, from the first, was a conservative, - albeit uncoerced -; and must consider the youthful expressions of his boyhood as being less natural to the man than even those of the many other revolutionists who became conservatives. The atmosphere of the romantic and democratic influences of the period acting upon his habits of thought thru his reading and social environment exposed him to the glamour of the French Revolution. He never really believed in Abstract Rights, and when he carefully thought out the implications of the movement, he gave his conservatism the ascendancy for all time. He gained enough of the spirit of the age to be really interested in the improvement of society, but he preferred, with decidedly deterministic optimism, to leave the means to God and established institutions.

So he believed that the existing government of England had been planned by men far wiser than the ignorant masses of
French or English revolutionists. Therefore, he favored a strong centralization of power to preserve that form of government from any alteration and to enable it to bear a firm part in educating the people to loftier social and political virtues. He considered the Church of England the bulwark of the State in the promotion of the loyalty and morality of its subjects; and, because the toleration of the extension of the principles of Catholicism was inconsistent with the preservation of the integrity of the Church and State, he earnestly opposed all concessions to Catholics. He naturally disapproved of all the other sects, which tended to destroy the unity of the established church. He worked against parliamentary reform because he believed that the lower class had, already, as much power as they could wisely use. To guard against the spread of disaffection, he advocated some limitations upon the freedom of the press and severer dealing with sedition by suspension of habeas corpus. Then, in order to make the lower orders more contented with the existing institutions and to create better subjects, he proposed social and economic reforms, - most of which strove for the relief of the poverty and of the congestion of those whom Adam Smith had called - to the offense of Southey - (altho his own attitude did not grant them equality) "manufacturing animals."

So Southey, from his youth, honestly desired the "amelioration of mankind;" and, for most of his life, devoted his talents to those methods which could be put into practice with the least disorder. That he ceased to gaze in the east for the sun, when the cause of liberty at the beginning of the French
Revolution, became, in its progress, the cause of oppression, was commendable. That, as one critic has observed, he continued to gaze into the west when the sun had risen again in the east, was, as far as we can judge, a just criticism of his conservatism on reform. Yet he may have been right — for we do not know what would have followed a different course of action — in believing it was not time for such a sunrise. Whatever was the wisdom of the poet's political ideas, their sincerity was worthy the nobility almost universally ascribed to the man.
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