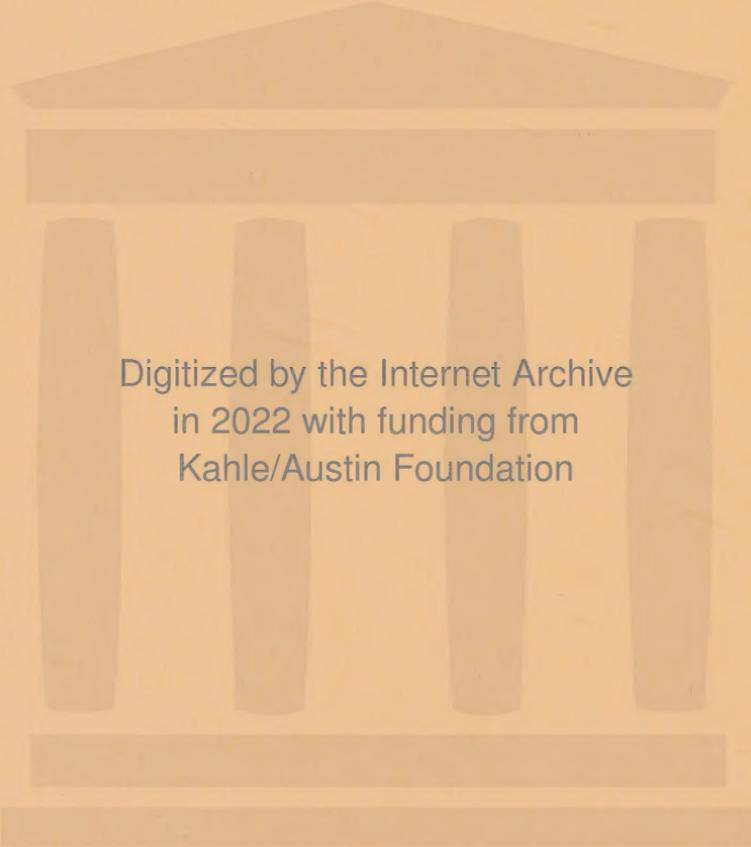


1844

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EDWARD CARPENTER

PROPHET OF HUMAN FELLOWSHIP

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1844-1929

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CHUSHICHI TSUZUKI

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Edward Carpenter by Roger Fry (1895), reproduced by permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London *frontispiece*

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Illustrations 1 a and b, 2 a and b, 4 and 8 are taken from Carpenter's *My Days and Dreams* (first published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd in June 1916).

Illustrations 3, 6 and 7 are from the Carpenter Collection, and are reproduced by courtesy of the Director, Sheffield City Libraries.

PREFACE

Many of the works written about the revived Socialist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century regard Edward Carpenter mostly as a generous eccentric, who left a lucrative post as a clerical fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to become something of a recluse at a cottage near Sheffield, where he wrote verse, indulged in sandal-making, and gave the occasional liberal financial contributions to the Socialist organisations. These earlier works did not discuss his homosexuality, either because it was still rather a taboo subject, or because their authors were too intent on the political side of the movement.

Lately there has been a reaction to this, encouraged no doubt by the growing interest in social history and the campaign for minority rights. As a result, Carpenter is seen by some mainly as a pioneer of the campaign for equal status for homosexuals and sometimes also as a champion of the women's cause.

In view of the rich abundance of sources of his life, however, it is possible to present a more balanced account of his career and to give a more coherent view of his thought. His own collection of papers at Sheffield City Library, which includes newspaper clippings of his lectures and his notes as well as his family papers, his letters to some of his close friends, and general correspondence from a great variety of people, many of them of considerable political or literary distinction, forms the core of the material. But there are also his literary works; many letters of his in other collections, some already published; and his own frank account of his sexual life in one of

Havelock Ellis's volumes on sexual inversion, published anonymously but easily to be traced.

From all these sources, it is possible to offer more definite answers to such questions as: did his homosexuality dictate his conversion to Socialism? What was his attitude towards Marxism? Was he an Anarchist? What contribution did he in fact make to the Socialist movement? What were his links with other literary figures, such as Walt Whitman, J. A. Symonds, Bernard Shaw, Lowes Dickinson and E. M. Forster? Was he a mystic or a faddist? And finally, what sort of a man was Edward Carpenter?

This study would not have been possible without generous help and encouragement from many people. I am very grateful to the Librarian and the Archivist of Sheffield City Library for assisting me over the years while I was working on the great quarry of the Carpenter Collection. Dr Henry Pelling inspired my research, read the manuscript at an early stage and gave me valuable suggestions for improvement. Professor James Joll read it at a later stage and gave me much encouragement when I needed it. I am under special obligations to Mr R. B. Aubry, Professor Maurice Bruce, Mr and Mrs Graham Healey, Mr David I. Masson, Dr Fred Reid and Mr Peter Sutcliffe. I am also indebted to the staff of the following libraries for their co-operation: John Rylands Library (Manchester), Brotherton Library (Leeds), King's College Library (Cambridge), St John's College Library (Cambridge), Cambridge University Library, Sheffield University Library, British Library, British Library of Political and Economic Science, and London Library. I should like to express my thanks to Mr William Davies of the Cambridge University Press who assisted me with efficiency and foresight. The Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield invited me to spend a year at Sheffield at the beginning of my research, while St John's College, Cambridge, gave me a free year at Cambridge towards its end. I wish to make grateful acknowledgement of their most generous help.

CHUSHICHI TSUZUKI

Meguro, Tokyo

INTRODUCTION

CARPENTER has been described as 'an eminent Victorian' who loathed his own age. 'He was homeless in the heyday of Victorian morality and hypocrisy and materialist science. He was an anti-puritan with a strong bent towards a kind of rational mysticism that had no Hebraism in it. He was the frankest of hedonists'.¹ As a young man he came to view with horror the hypocrisy of polite society and the alienation of the wealthy. He later looked back with sardonic distaste on 'the drawing-room table' which he remembered from his own Brighton household:

The British drawing-room of last century was a centre from which many paralysing influences radiated. Here the British matron, surrounded by her virginal daughters, sat enthroned. The men – husbands, brothers, sons, and their friends – were to all appearances inferior creatures. They took their cue from the ladies, and studied only the convenience of the latter. They effaced themselves, and deliberately talked a kind of nonsense which was called conversation. They wore clothing of subdued and dark hue, which served as a foil to the feminine glory; they sat on the more uncomfortable chairs, and were careful to take their tea and their tea-cake after the others. It was touching.

The lady of the house shunned 'vulgar' topics such as manual labour, atheism, or the facts of sex. Yet her drawing-room was the rendezvous of politicians, clergymen and literary people. Carpenter felt that Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, and even Carlyle 'dared not flout the Drawing-room Table'.²

In London he was struck by the glaring contrast of wealth and

poverty displayed even in High Street, Kensington, where one of his sisters lived:

On one side as you walk along the trottoir stands, in the gutter, a long row of the mere outcasts of humanity. . . Thin, starved, twisted with deceit and degradation, such faces infect one with their own despair. . . And then on the pavement, jostling each other, wrapped to the chin in furs, goes the highly respectable crowd, 'stiff with decency and starch', from which the outcasts are trying to extort a penny. . . Bred in luxury and ease, they have seldom been called on to make sacrifices for each other. . . the life of human toil and human fellowship has passed them by; their affectional natures have become dwarfed; their power of sympathy contracted within the four walls of a stuffy respectability. . . A brougham drives up and scatters the ragged ones. A footman obsequiously opens the door; and another leaden-eyed 'lady' wrapped in furs disappears into 'Barker's'.³

Carpenter's whole life presented an open revolt against this society; the two remedies he suggested were the commingling of 'classes and masses' and the adoption of the natural modes of life still prevalent, as he thought, among the latter. In pursuit of these aims he hit upon the ideas of community, democracy, and simplicity by throwing Whitman and Thoreau, Ruskin and Marx, and above all the *Bhagavad Gita* into the melting pot of his Socialism. Thus he felt that Communism, complex and human, and savagery, natural and free, were to overcome civilisation, the culmination of which was the Victorian society.

One of the Victorian orthodoxies was an optimistic belief in science and progress, and Carpenter revolted against inhumanities involved in this almost blind faith in man's mastery over nature. His revolt, however, was somewhat erratic: disillusioned with what he felt to be the shams of the Established Church, he threw religion overboard, but he soon found himself tormented by the callousness of modern science. An ex-curate and a former lecturer on scientific subjects, he at last endeavoured to reconcile religion and science. Tolstoy welcomed Carpenter's objections to experimental science as opportune; his reading of the latter's *Civilisation* led him to declare: 'I consider him a worthy heir of Carlyle and Ruskin'.⁴

Carpenter's 'whole-hearted' revolt against the Victorian orthodoxies, writes Edward Thompson, was 'expressed in an individual-

istic form'.⁵ Perhaps it would be more accurate to call his revolt personal than individualistic. It originated from his sense of alienation, and took the form of an effort to conquer his own isolation and self-consciousness and to restore health and unity to his personality. Hence arose his strong desire for personal contacts, for friendship, fellowship, and comradeship, which was not only whole-hearted but 'whole-bodied'.

Towards Democracy, his major work, has been aptly described as 'a book which seeks less to establish a point of view than to find personal contacts'.⁶ The kernel of such contacts was what he called 'the common life' in each man, the demos, or 'cosmic' consciousness. His idea of spiritual democracy and his concept of sublimated homosexuality had the same roots, the recognition of that 'common life' and the need for free expression of personality. Thus his hymn to democracy not only extolled its egalitarian basis but its instinctive and spontaneous features.

His Socialism was also intensely personal. It could not have long survived active work in the national movement which was fraught with sectarian struggles. He was willing to assist the Democratic Federation which was still undeveloped, but he was only marginally associated with the national Socialist bodies such as the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and the Socialist League, the Fabians and the Independent Labour Party. He felt happier in his work for a local Socialist society or for the ethical and humanitarian movements or even for Anarchists, in which the sense of brotherhood seemed to prevail.

It is perhaps wrong to say that Carpenter emphasised the 'personal' as against the political.⁷ His was an approach to politics, and Sheila Rowbotham does justice to this when she writes of his 'personal politics', although what she calls 'sexual politics' was not yet possible.⁸ His peculiarly personal approach was an example of politics by personal influence and persuasion, or to put it in a more idealistic way, a sort of direct democracy in action. As such it was feasible mainly in a local Socialist body or some such small community. This would at least partly explain his devotion to local politics in Sheffield.

Yet the number of the pilgrims to his hermitage at Millthorpe showed that his personal contacts went much further than the local community. Emma Goldman, the American Anarchist, came 'with

the accompaniment of a brace of detectives from Scotland Yard'.⁹ Besides Cambridge dons and students, the Glasiers, the Salts, and Olive Schreiner, 'all the lunatics of the world seemed to come to see him'.¹⁰ Carpenter's writings, too, were largely personal. He could not hide himself behind the letters, as he was always intent on establishing personal contacts with his readers. 'You are perfectly impartial and fair', he wrote to the author of *A Passage to India*, 'and do not take sides anywhere that I can discover – always drawing the life (as nearly as can be) *as it is*, and keeping yourself out of sight. I could not write (a novel) like that. (Should tend to be drawn into the fray!)'¹¹ He wrote numerous sketches of his friends – lovers and acquaintances – all revealing his involvement in their lives and affairs and his faith in the ultimate triumph of the common people.

Ancient religion lured him to the East, but it was not only his own *guru* but also a Singhalese peasant, a Bengali youth, and 'the native "proletariat"' in Bombay – post-office workers and railway clerks – that he remembered with affection. Later he was much esteemed as an advanced thinker by passive resisters like Gandhi.¹² He met Tagore in London and shared his view that the salvation of the people would come from the people.¹³

He endeavoured to obtain a measure of respect for homosexuality, but it remained a forbidden subject for many years in England. In the freer atmosphere of Berlin in the early 1930s, Christopher Isherwood saw a gallery of photographs including those of 'famous homosexual couples', Carpenter with George Merrill, Whitman with Peter Doyle, Oscar Wilde with Alfred Douglas, at a museum which belonged to Dr Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science. These were displayed together with fantasy pictures drawn by Dr Hirschfeld's patients and other curious products of sexual inversion.¹⁴ Homosexuality was certainly not sublimated nor even honoured in this display. Carpenter himself held that sex, especially non-productive sex, was a natural, private affair not to be banned or regulated by the state nor to be encouraged or excited artificially.

His millennial vision has been described as a fit subject for psychoanalysis.¹⁵ This may be true; but it was shared by many others at a time when the peace and prosperity of the first industrial nation were threatened and the 'dawn of a revolutionary epoch' was wildly proclaimed. He learned from experience, and in time his millen-

arianism became sober. He was said to be 'a complete believer in the Labour movement', though he did not belong to any of its sects.¹⁶ After 1906 he more or less identified the Labour movement with the Labour party, while welcoming signs of new life in the movement such as Syndicalism and Guild Socialism. Towards the end of his life, he wrote to George Lansbury: 'England is *slowly slowly* (as her habit is) waking up. A day may come – in the far future, when she will be fully awake! May that day be soon!'¹⁷ At his death his own hymn *England Arise!* rivalled *The Red Flag* in popularity in the British Labour movement.¹⁸

A great deal of the stuffiness of English society, to which he objected, has now disappeared. In this, at least, he was truly prophetic. A modern seer or prophet was often a trouble-maker and sometimes an outcast. But Carpenter caused surprisingly little trouble, perhaps because he eschewed the limelight of national politics and chose the life of a recluse, a voluntary exile from civilisation. 'The outcast of one age is the hero of another', wrote Carpenter. A. J. P. Taylor did not enjoy Carpenter's beard, homespun tweeds, vegetarianism, 'free love', and 'soft-headed ramblings' and called him 'individualism at its worst'. Yet he seems to have shared his view of the trouble-maker so far as foreign policy was concerned. He even echoed Carpenter when he wrote that 'England has risen all the same' after all the vicissitudes that marked her history.¹⁹ Carpenter has been called a 'ringleader of the cranks and prigs', but the critic who said this hastened to add that by a crank he meant 'someone who is not numerically normal'.²⁰ Carpenter – a modern seer – was such a crank by definition.

The evolution of our 'prophet', our 'Noble Savage' as he was nicknamed by his critics, however, was only gradual. His revolt long remained personal both in its nature and its effects. For some time he was only dimly conscious of its symptoms. Perhaps he was slow to mature, or possibly he was handicapped by the peculiarities of his Brighton household which was overwhelmingly feminine. We shall now begin with an analysis of this household, an example of the 'British drawing-room table' of the nineteenth century, in order to appreciate the true nature of his revolt and challenge.

ONE

A BRIGHTON CHILDHOOD

BRIGHTON, formerly the little seaside town of Brighthelmston, came into prominence early in the nineteenth century, owing to the appreciation of the hygienic value of its seawater. It also had the advantage of royal patronage bestowed on it by George, Prince of Wales, later Prince Regent, later still King George IV. Partly assisted by the opening of the railway in 1841, the town attained the zenith of its fame about the middle of the century, and attracted many great literary and political figures of the day as well as members of the nobility and other affluent people. It was into this charmed world of privilege, wealth and fashion that Edward Carpenter was born on 29 August 1844.

On that very day the *Brighton Gazette*, in addition to its usual 'fashionable chronicle' of the comings and goings of dukes and duchesses, earls and countesses, and their families and dependants, reported with a sigh of relief the defeat of the militant miners in Northumberland and Durham in their strike against the colliery-owner, the third Marquess of Londonderry. Indeed, the growth of fashionable Brighton coincided with the spread of unrest among the lower orders of the population in other parts of the country, especially in the industrial North and Midlands, where Luddism and Owenism, Radicalism and Chartism, in turn gave vent to various aspects of that growing unrest. Brighton itself was not immune from the popular upsurge: a co-operative association was formed in the town in 1827. It was perhaps an apt warning, though necessarily ineffectual, to the complacent society of nobility and gentility that

the term 'Socialist' was used for the first time in a magazine article dealing with the Brighton Association, which was published in the same year, at a time when the town was adding handsome squares and terraces to its fashionable quarters. Indeed, Carpenter was to be identified in his mature years with the cause of human brotherhood and co-operation, but his family, immersed as it was in what Carlyle had described as the 'human nexus of cash payment', took its full share of the respectability of Brighton society.

Carpenter in his autobiography has made a casual reference to his ancestors who lived at Launceston, Cornwall,¹ and among the Carpenters who flourished in and near that town it is possible to find John Carpenter, a divine of the sixteenth century, and his son Nathaniel, author and philosopher. Edward's own father, Charles, traced his pedigree to one Hugh Cressingham of Berkshire, an ingenious soldier, who secured the victory of his army in a war against the Welsh by devising a bridge which was severed in the middle but appeared sound till the enemy stepped on it: he earned the surname of Carpenter about 1274.² James Carpenter, Edward's grandfather, who was born in 1760, did much to establish the family tradition of naval service and distinction. He entered the navy in 1776, and was soon across the Atlantic sharing in skirmishes off the American coast. During the war against revolutionary France, he took part in an attack on Martinique and also assisted in 'reducing to submission the Caribs and negroes of St. Vincent, Grenada, and Dominica'.³ He was on his last voyage in 1812 as Captain of the *Antelope* off Newfoundland. In that year he was made a Rear-Admiral; he became a Vice-Admiral in 1819 and a full Admiral in 1837. It seems that he spent his later years at St Leonards, Sussex, apparently as a wealthy rentier amidst an abundance of 'interest, dividends & annuities' which were prominent in his will. His wife Elizabeth died in May 1844 and he himself followed her less than a year later on 16 March 1845.

His eldest son, Charles Carpenter, who was born in 1797, took up his father's profession, entered the navy as a volunteer in 1810, and became midshipman on board the *Antelope* when his father was in command. After the Napoleonic War he was stationed in the East Indies and became a lieutenant in 1818, at a time when the navy

was being put back on a peacetime basis. His health was impaired by the bad climate of Trincomalee where he was stationed, and life in the navy became somewhat 'distasteful', so he found it opportune to go on half pay. After 1820 he was no longer on active service, but it was only in 1851 that he was formally placed on the reserved list.⁴

Charles lived in London and steeped himself in contemporary literature. He admired Samuel Taylor Coleridge and visited him on several occasions. He also read for the Bar, to which he was called in 1829, and practised for a while with some success. In 1833 he married Sophia Wilson, the daughter of Thomas Wilson, also an officer of the Royal Navy, who in his later years was engaged in shipbuilding. Wilson was a widower, and the newly-wedded pair had to live with the old man at his house at Marsh Street, Walthamstow, then an isolated village that lay between the Marshes and the Lea. Possibly the legal profession was not agreeable to his romantic cast of mind: he soon retired from the Bar.

Thereafter he had no settled occupation, but meanwhile his family began to grow. The eldest daughter, Sophia, was born in 1835, and the eldest son, Charles Wilson, two years later. Three more daughters followed, Eliza in 1838, Emily in 1839, and Ellen Maria probably in the following year. The second son, George, was born in March 1841. The death in the next month of Thomas Wilson, however, released his daughter and her husband from their filial ties to this rather uninviting district by enabling them to move to Brighton, not far from the place where Charles's father, Admiral Carpenter, was living. Yet Edward Carpenter recorded that his mother had often told him that this was 'the worst period of their married life'.⁵ The main cause of their anxiety appears to have been pecuniary, aggravated no doubt by the rapid growth of the family and perhaps by the cost of respectability in fashionable Brighton.

The family fortune was mended when Admiral Carpenter died in the following year, leaving the substantial part of his estate and effects to his only son Charles. The family continued to increase in size: Edward was followed by two younger sisters, Alice Fanny and Julia Dora, the latter born in 1849, and one younger brother, Alfred, born (probably after Alice) in 1847. With the ample legacy from his father, Charles now settled permanently in Brighton, occupying a

large house at 45 Brunswick Square, and in his son's words, led 'the life of the respectable rentier'. A rentier with a difference, however, he proved to be, for he cultivated romantic mysticism under the influence of the German idealist philosophers, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. His philosophical and meditative turn of mind was apparently inherited by Edward who as a young man also shared much of the political opinion of his father who was 'a philosophical Radical of the Mill school'.⁶

'The Social life which encircled us at Brighton was artificial enough', wrote Edward, 'but it was the standard which we children had to live to. . . I never imagined, it never occurred to me, that there *was* any other life.' He was a sensitive, dreamy child, an introvert, and often felt himself to be a 'failure and an object of ridicule' among the philistines.⁷ Thus in his early youth he was perhaps as much of a rebel as his father had been, something of a romantic rebel feeling uneasy about the 'artificiality' that surrounded him.

Edward's grandfather on his mother's side was Scottish, and his own mother suffered, as he thought, from 'a baneful parental influence - Scottish pride and puritanism'.⁸ She rejected all expression of natural affection as bordering on sin, and her children learned to suppress and control all emotion. It was perhaps not so much the atmosphere of fashionable Brighton, with which the children apparently had little to do, as the pressure of the prudishness of his own mother, a 'firm, just and courageous' woman,⁹ that caused young Edward to feel estranged and encouraged his early proclivity to solitude.

At any rate the family of ten active boys and girls had a world of their own, quite independent of their parents. They often overran the large garden of Brunswick Square to the despair of the gardener, kept a variety of pets in the back yard, and chased each other up and down the stairs in the spacious house. A house in this square usually had domestic offices in the basement, a hall and dining-room on the ground floor, with a double drawing-room above, and two floors of bedrooms, one for the family and the other for the servants. This was the house which Edward was to remember with mixed feelings of pleasure and frustration.

Edward learned a little Latin from Sophia before he began his formal education. At the age of ten he entered Brighton College,

where he was called 'Chips', an inevitable family nickname. His record in the school was good but not remarkable: he took about equal interest in classics and mathematics and gained some prizes. At school his brother Charles was a hero, easily first in everything he took a hand in. In 1857, when Charles left Brighton College to join the Indian Civil Service, the nine other children migrated with their parents and two servants to Versailles for a year's sojourn; Edward and Alfred had some experience of French education at the Lycée Impériale.

In 1860 a letter came from Charles who was then stationed at Futtentpore as assistant magistrate:

My dear Teddy . . . When I left, you were rather a skinny sprat; now I suppose you are a lively young fish, I hope not a loose one. Formerly you used to suffer from a 'tearing' cough (or 'wearing' was it?). Now I suppose you are as strong & healthy as a young Bull of Bashan. Corresponding to these changes in your outer man . . . I suppose there are changes in the manners & customs of the creature. Euclid & Quadratic Equation & the Binominal Theorem form probably a sort of light repast for you now, while you take Trigonometry or Statics as your solid food. Cicero & Thucydides of course you keep under your pillow every night, & Latin & Greek prose slip off the end of your pen as easily as a piece of butter off a hot knife . . . French of course you speak like a native.

He advised Edward to play games which would 'make you accustomed to fatigue & add . . . several years to your life'.¹⁰ Charles had acted as a guardian to his younger brothers, but now he could only send advice by post. Actually the other male members of the family were growing up and going their separate ways. Alfred left school in 1860 in order to join the navy; George entered the army about the same time.

Edward was now left alone at Brighton with his six sisters. He became their confidant, all the more so because of his own apparently feminine traits, for instance his interest in music which was then considered inappropriate for a boy. His attempts to learn the piano had been treated as an intrusion upon the female sanctuary. His mother, however, took pity on him and taught him the notes, and his piano practice, which soon advanced as far as Beethoven's Sonatas, became his greatest joy. Nevertheless, the presence of six sisters often with other girls visiting them was overwhelming and, he later

thought, was 'tragic in its emptiness'.¹¹ Some years later when he himself left Brighton, this emptiness became identified in his mind with the Brighton society in which girls were brought up with one idea in life, that of taking their proper place in society. 'A few meagre accomplishments – and to loaf up and down the parade, criticising each other, were the means to bring about this desirable result.' In his own house, where there were always six or seven servants doing the household duties, his six sisters 'had absolutely nothing to do except dabble in paints and music . . . and wander aimlessly from room to room to see if by any chance "anything was going on"'.¹² He was, however, much attached to them, and especially to Lizzie, and was often to be found standing quietly by her, turning over the pages for her while she played Beethoven on the piano. Lizzie was a sickly girl, and 'the life of the house centred round her sofa'.¹³ With another sister, Ellen, who had some talent for landscape and animal paintings, he sometimes rode on hired hacks over the Downs. Sophie, the eldest, dominated the others with her competence and astuteness to such an extent that her younger sisters whispered: 'Sophie has no soul.'¹⁴

Like his sisters, Edward himself began to feel a hunger of his own heart that remained unsatisfied. He formed 'glutinous boy-friendships . . . of the usual type' at the school. A young, handsome curate of a local church 'in his spotless surplice' impressed him so much that he even dreamed of taking Orders himself.¹⁵ In a statement on his own sex life which he later prepared for the benefit of Havelock Ellis,¹⁶ he gave the following frank account of his trouble as a boy:

At the age of eight or nine, and long before distinct sexual feelings declared themselves, I felt a friendly attraction towards my own sex, and this developed after the age of puberty into a passionate sense of love, which, however, never found any expression for itself till I was fully 20 years of age. I was a day boarder at school and heard little of school talk on sex subjects, was very reserved and modest besides; no elder person or parent even spoke to me on such matters; and the passion for my own sex developed itself gradually, utterly uninfluenced from the outside. I never even, during all this period, and till a good deal later, learned the practice of masturbation. My own sexual nature was a mystery to me. I found myself with a highly loving and clinging temperament, was intensely

miserable. I thought about my male friends – sometimes boys of my own age, sometimes elder boys, and once even a master – during the day and dreamt about them at night, but was too convinced that I was a hopeless monstrosity even to make any effectual advances.¹⁷

Thus he remained unable to deal squarely with his attachment to his own sex: he concealed his feeling and was unhappy.

In Brighton, however, he found he got most comfort and satisfaction from nature. On stormy nights it was his 'grisly joy' to go down to the roaring sea in pitch darkness and behold the elements. But it was the Downs and 'their chaste subdued gracious outlines and quiet colour' that appealed more to him and touched the chord of his heart. The Downs were his escape, and they healed the wounds inflicted by fellow men or by his own inability to express himself. 'Nature was more to me, I believe, than any human attachment, and the Downs were my Nature', he wrote.¹⁸ He had not read Wordsworth nor Shelley, the Romantic poets who were to influence him when he grew a little older. Yet he was born into romanticism with his passionate longing for friendship and his adoration of natural beauty. And Brighton provided for him not only an appropriate background for his youthful visions but also the opportunity to perceive the features of discord in what he called 'civilisation'.

TWO A CAMBRIDGE LIBERAL

IN 1863 at the age of nineteen, Edward left school, and spent the summer in Switzerland, staying in a pension near Vevey. In the following year he spent five months with a German teacher and his family at Heidelberg, an experience which, his father may well have hoped, would prove to be an antidote to his religiosity, for the boy's vague inclination for the Church did not please his father whose views on religion were anything but orthodox. The plan, if there was one, however, did not work out well. At Heidelberg he wore a tall hat at an English church on Sundays and behaved as a young English gentleman should. An account of student life which he sent to his father was not calculated to encourage the latter's hopes: 'I know one fellow who has been student for 17 years . . . There are a great many Russian students here; but they scarcely deserve the name of students, for their whole time is spent in duelling . . . I was in the Hirschgasse the other day and saw three duels'.¹ In this same letter he urged his father to put down his name for Cambridge at once. Eventually he was admitted to Trinity Hall, and went up to Cambridge for matriculation in Michaelmas term of 1864.

Trinity Hall was then head of the river. He himself rowed, talked boating slang, and became secretary of the boat club. He also played fives and rackets, and thus 'with games and wine parties and boat suppers, life slid easily onward'.² His time, however, was nicely divided between the river and his study. At the end of the first term he headed the undergraduates of his year in college examinations;

encouraged by his tutor Henry Latham, later Master of Trinity Hall, he read for the mathematical tripos, and went through the usual cramming for the exams.

He did not study mathematics exclusively, however. He was equally interested in literature, and in 1866 won a college prize for an English essay with his paper 'On the Continuance of Modern Civilisation'.³ This subject was to become his life's theme, and as such the paper deserves due attention. He described 'civilisation' as a liberal utopia, in which, he believed, the universal harmony of individual interests would prevail, party strife, class jealousy, and crime would die out, and the function of government would be reduced to a minimum. Indeed, the amount of liberty allowed to individuals should become a measure of 'the national advancement in civilisation'. But nineteenth-century liberalism, he thought, would have to tackle the problem of equality in a society which became increasingly conscious of its class basis. 'When society stratifies itself into sharply defined classes, then the individuality of men is crushed, & class interest and class tyranny are all in all.' Thus he advocated 'the equal diffusion of education . . . among all classes', an ideal to which he was later to dedicate himself. He also examined the 'more hidden cause of progress' that lay in the character of the nation, and called it 'energy'. He abhorred 'idleness' which was 'a continual source of sedition & a continual drag on progress'. In short, he upheld the Calvinist ethos of work and labour as a gospel that would 'loosen the burthens of classes'. An attack on the idle rich was not launched but implied. He vaguely felt that capitalism and liberalism might prove incompatible, and this feeling later grew to such an extent as almost to reverse the meaning of 'civilisation', but the outline of his liberal utopia remained practically unchanged and provided the basis of his more mature view of social change.

Carpenter seems by now to have openly espoused the cause of advanced liberalism. Indeed, Trinity Hall itself was reputed to be liberal or even radical in politics, and there were pronounced elements of religious dissent among its fellows.⁴ Henry Fawcett, an economist of the school of John Stuart Mill and a fellow since 1856, had just been elected to the chair of Political Economy, and soon became a Liberal MP for Brighton. Charles Dilke, the future Liberal statesman and 'a fellow-commoner B.A.' for one year, was two

years senior to Carpenter in his college, and well known as President of the Union at the time. Leslie Stephen, historian of English utilitarianism and the initiator of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was a clerical fellow: he was labouring under the tension between 'evangelical morality and Victorian rationalism',⁵ soon abandoned college services, and was about to resign. He was shortly to marry.

It was Carpenter who was, in 1867, offered the fellowship that was to be relinquished by Stephen. He was immensely flattered and at once wrote to his father:

It is a very good offer indeed in a money point of view, as besides holding a Lectureship & Fellowship I should probably be able to take pupils, which is a very profitable trade. . . I have always thought that the life of a Don is rather a stagnant sort of life and I do not think I could make up my mind to settle down altogether as such. At the same time I do not know that I ought to refuse such a good opening, because even if I do not remain here altogether, it will very likely to lead to something else, and a few years spent here would not have been wasted. Besides, the satisfaction of being able at last to turn to account all the money you have spent on my education is a great inducement to me to close with the offer at once. Under any circumstances, it is very satisfactory to have such an offer made me now, before my degree, as it is as good as a promise of a Fellowship of some kind.⁶

Apparently Carpenter sought to appease and reassure his father who might have had some doubts about a *clerical* fellowship. Yet his worldly wisdom hid the ominous gap that lay between the advanced liberalism to which he was now committed and the clerical duties which he was prepared to accept for the sake of convenience rather than of conviction.

Things turned out as he had hoped. In the mathematical tripos of 1868 he was tenth wrangler. In the autumn of that year he returned to residence as a lecturer, and soon was elected to a clerical fellowship. In May 1869 he became a Deacon and a year later, in June 1870, was ordained by the Bishop of Ely. Although his performance in the College Chapel was usually met with 'all the gaping signs of unconcealed boredom',⁷ this only hardened him in his determination to make his sermons more satisfactory. Thus he became a curate of

the Church of St Edward, Cambridge, which was under the patronage of the fellows of Trinity Hall.

A conscientious curate, he wrote an essay entitled 'The Religious Influence of Art', in which he maintained that Art, especially in the form of church music, should help man to come into contact with religion: for this he won a university prize of £100. In an article on 'Natural Scenery' published in his old school magazine, he sought to emulate Wordsworth, and spoke of the presence of the eternal in 'the passing flower', 'speaking. . . with us in the spirit language of Nature'.⁸ A sermon entitled 'The Divine Mind and other Minds' which he prepared about this time throws some further light upon the moral and mystical basis of his social ideas. 'Each individual is . . . different from every other', he wrote, 'because. . . he sums up the whole of Nature in a different direction, or because he regards the one mind from a different point of view'.⁹ Thus his own view was no mere pantheism, but something which we might call divine individualism. This he worked out from the liberal theology around him, and he later developed it into a broad foundation for his Socialism and Anarchism.

Carpenter came into close contact with the founder of Christian Socialism, Frederick Denison Maurice, who became the incumbent of St Edward's Church in 1870. He was a witness of the comic scene that took place when Thomas Charles Geldart, the Master, raised an ineffectual objection to this appointment by mysterious references to the opinions of 'other people', who turned out to be his own wife, a strong opponent of Maurice's heretical views.¹⁰

Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, Maurice had developed in his lectures the theory of an essential 'I' and its fulfilment through its service to the community. Carpenter shared much of Maurice's liberal Anglicanism and Christian Socialism, and later admitted that Maurice had been 'a great influence in my life' and 'it was one of the great objects of [his] life to bring all classes together'.¹¹ But he apparently felt that Maurice's worthy aims could not be achieved without altering the shells or forms of the society including the Church itself. 'I saw a good deal of Maurice', he wrote: 'He was kindness itself. I opened out my difficulties to him; and he was I think troubled to find I could not reconcile myself to

the position which *he* occupied apparently without difficulty. But to me his attitude was a growing wonder'.¹² Carpenter began to show signs of uneasiness and even discontent beneath the mask of 'an amiable curate'.

The ancient Universities of Cambridge and Oxford had become 'alive to the necessity of placing themselves in the van of popular progress', wrote the *Cambridge Independent Press* early in 1870. It cited recent measures of university reform such as 'the institution of middle-class examinations, the opening of the Universities to a new and poorer class of students, and the inauguration of lectures to women', and confidently declared that the existing religious tests were 'doomed'.¹³ Indeed, Oxford and Cambridge, which had 'appeared in a state of psychopathic withdrawal from society' before the middle of the century,¹⁴ were now coming to dominate the education of the governing elite through a great intellectual awakening that went along with a fearless debate over the reform both of society and of the universities for the secular and democratic Britain that was to come.

A petition drafted by Henry Fawcett and signed by seventy-four Cambridge fellows and tutors in the early sixties had set off the parliamentary campaign against the religious tests in the two great universities, but the reform agitation and the controversy over the Education Bill delayed the progress of the Test Bill. Finally, as a delaying tactic in the Lords, a select committee was appointed in the summer of 1870, to inquire into the safeguarding of religious instruction at the universities, and its recommendations were probably instrumental in retaining clerical fellowships for some time to come.

It was against such a background that a memorial was presented to Gladstone by thirty-four clerics, most of them Oxford or Cambridge fellows, including Edward Carpenter himself. They contended that

it is in the interest of religion and conscience that those who are unwilling to continue in the ministry of the Establishment should be permitted to resign their office without even being called upon to assign their reasons. They also think it impolitic, in the interests both of the Church and of the

public, that any class of the community should consider itself bound by law to an irrevocable calling.¹⁵

This liberal document, however, evoked a comment from Ernest A. Gray, a friend of Carpenter's at Trinity Hall and later the vicar of Woodley:

First of all Hopps [F. L. Hopkins of Trinity Hall] appears heading the list, then your name and beneath Jowett, Brewer, Froude and a hideous list of swells. In the van of such an army you must lose your bet to me & become a B[ishop] before you're 60. That is unless you take the benefit of the Act you propose being passed for the benefit of yourself and other P[arsons].¹⁶

Hopkins, son of a Cambridge wine merchant, soon gave up clerical duties and retired to the life of a country gentleman, retaining his fellowship, while Carpenter, as we shall see later, lost his because he was true to his liberal principles. In the meantime, the Clerical Disabilities Bill, promoted in consequence of this memorial, was passed, opening the way for Carpenter to retract his clerical ambitions if he had had any. In July 1871 the Test Act itself became law.

Carpenter belonged to one or two literary societies consisting of young fellows of Cambridge colleges, and especially frequented one organised by R. K. Clifford, Fellow of Trinity. Clifford was expected, in Leslie Stephen's words, to 'rise to the highest place among contemporary men of science'.¹⁷ He became intimate with Professor Fawcett and acted as secretary to the Republican Club of which Fawcett was a leading spirit. Carpenter, then an aspiring curate, rushed round after church to take part in the reading of Mazzini's *Duty of Man* with Clifford, and well remembered his 'satyr-like face' and 'blasphemous treatment of the existing gods'.¹⁸ Although he seems to have carefully eschewed full commitment to the Republican Club,¹⁹ Mazzini and Clifford were part of his education at the time.

It was about this time that he struck up a close and lasting friendship with Charles George Oates, an undergraduate of his college, who was later called to the Bar but who resided at his home near Leeds with his mother. In one of his earliest letters to Oates, he

expressed his attachment to this new friend in a rather romantic fashion:

I have often thought of you and our conversation, while I have been away; and ever with the increasing conviction that anything which raises our deepest feelings cannot be a mere shadow. . . To me all scenes of Nature being ultimately the same feeling, there is a deep unity underlying all the diversity of their beauty. And equally do I believe it true that there is a spirit of what is noble and beautiful passing through all men alike, inspiring alike all their wonderfully distinct personalities. Therefore, even if the individual admiration be perishable in its accidents it cannot be so in essence. . . You see that I make a medley of Kant, Comte, and Christianity. . . I have been preaching and have consequently got into voluble habits.²⁰

Edward Anthony Beck, a classical scholar and prizeman, later Master of Trinity Hall, had rooms adjoining Carpenter's when he became a fellow in 1871. Carpenter had visited him at his house at Castle Rising, where his 'essay' was eagerly read by Beck's family. The two friends would spend a day together in London, visiting art galleries: 'Of our day in London', wrote Beck, 'I remember a great blurring of banners, my Ganymede, and all the Turners encausticized into one great burning line of sunset sea, all set in a halo of Carpenter'.²¹ 'He and I', recalled Carpenter, 'chummed together a good deal – indeed there was a touch of romance in our attachment – we compared literary notes, went abroad together once or twice'.²² On his return from a continental tour with Beck he wrote to Oates:

We enjoyed ourselves enormously. . . We expatiated among the flowers & snow of Switzerland; & dreamed of symphonies of colour amid the Italian lakes; & melted with astonishment and heat at Milan; and lived a long time ago at Venice; and went up to heaven in an incense-cloud of art at Munich. And – what I wanted especially to tell you – we went to Lugano.

At a small cemetery near Lugano they visited the grave of Edward Royds, a former student of Trinity Hall, who had fallen to his death from the heights of Monte San Salvatore. 'But it is not the fall', Carpenter continued: 'nor even death that fills us with sad thoughts, but as you have said. . . it is the half-inarticulate dread, it is the scarcely-confessed nightmare dream of divided love; nay! of hopeless, impossible love.' In Paris he parted company with Beck and visited the Beethoven Festival at Bonn on his way home.²³

‘Two letters I have of yours [are] full of marvels . . .’, wrote Beck from Castle Rising:

You are the most poetical poet that ever was: I don’t mean productionally, but personally. . . Since I have been back, I have been writing a poem in blank verse on ‘Job’s Wife’ . . . but lately I have done absolutely nothing . . . I have been so happy, and so busy doing nothing, at home, that I have not retraversed our tour so much as I ought to have done . . . You have no idea how practical I am. Everybody acknowledges it. . . I have utterly abjured all poetry, both for reading & writing. I look at the rising moon unmoved – I wad my mental ears against all manner of sentiment: I will not allow myself to cry or ache inwardly at any sorrow or any injustice: I systematically train myself into a consistent brutality. I am utterly changed: – it is all the reaction from you. –

For yourself, I can only repeat, Be as jolly as you can, and don’t go near Cambridge till you can help it; then, after 4 months absence, you will greet it with joy, not ennui. And the God’s sake do something wicked or selfish or frail, and don’t be one of those whom the gods love.²⁴

Apparently Beck meant to be of some use to his friend by encouraging him to be a little more ‘selfish’. But his worldly wisdom led to his apostasy, and he soon drifted away from Carpenter whom he had once called ‘my sunlit hemisphere’.

Carpenter found solace and encouragement in the reading of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* at this time. In 1868 a selection of Whitman’s poems edited by William Michael Rossetti (brother of the Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel) was published in London. Shortly afterwards Carpenter received a blue-covered copy of the book from H. D. Warr, also a Fellow of Trinity Hall. He was fascinated by the new gospel he found there: in a group of poems called ‘Children of Adam’ Whitman sang ‘the love of the body of man or woman’, while in another entitled ‘Calamus’ he extolled ‘the manly love of comrades’. Indeed, he made ‘comradeship’ an integral part of his theory of democracy.

In his prose essay published in 1871 entitled *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman sought to ‘spiritualize’ our ‘materialist and vulgar’ democracy by spreading ‘threads of manly friendship’ that were to be ‘carried to degrees hitherto unknown – not only giving tone to individual character, and making it unprecedentedly emotional, muscu-

lar, heroic, and refined, but having the deepest relations to general politics'. Carpenter felt he had discovered in this book 'a mine of new thought':²⁵ indeed, there he could find a whole series of ideas and attitudes that were to become his own – an eloquent condemnation of 'an atmosphere of hypocrisy', panegyrics of 'the People', the idea of 'the women of America . . . raised to become the robust equals of men', the transcendental nature of equality, and the virtue of simplicity. He was captivated by Whitman as he had never been even by Wordsworth or Shelley, under whose influence he had been previously. Yet this new light only helped to intensify his sense of alienation by making it transparent and seemingly hopeless as long as he lived under his existing arrangements as a curate and clerical don.

Carpenter began to feel that all his professional work from the reading of the services to the visiting of old women in their almshouses was sham and pretence. He had already sensed this, though but dimly, when at the end of his examination for the priesthood he was told by the Bishop of Ely, Harold Browns, that in spite of his unorthodox views on the Atonement the Bishop could not refuse to ordain him. He was finding Maurice insensitive and unhelpful to his woes, and he was shocked, perhaps somewhat superciliously, by 'the deadly Philistinism of a little provincial congregation; the tradesmen and shopkeepers in their sleek Sunday best; the petty vulgarities and hypocrisies; the discordant music of the choir' at St Edward's.²⁶ So in the middle of 1871 he left Maurice to find another curate and 'ran away'. Indeed, he ran away to that pleasant continental trip with Beck to which we referred above.

In his letter to Oates on this trip, quoted earlier, however, he made no reference to what he and Beck had seen in Paris only a few months after the defeat of the Commune – the Vendôme Column and its dislocated joints still lying on the ground, the Hôtel de Ville gutted, marks of shot and shell everywhere on streets and buildings. Moreover, he was interrogated by the Prussian police who suspected him to be a Communard refugee.²⁷ In October he returned to his lecturing and college work but not to the church duties. What he had seen in Paris stuck in his mind.

His sermons and lectures now underwent a significant change. In

one of these he expatiated on a thesis which later he was to elaborate as a Socialist. The one dominant idea in England, he said, had been 'to get on' in the world, and this concealed the fact that 'the non-workers or idle people' were 'living on the labour of those whom with an elegant contempt they term the lower classes'. Every member of society, he wrote, should 'devote some of his work to it', because he received so much at the hands of others. 'Each man owes a duty to society according to the station in which he is placed, the education he has received, and the work of which he is capable.' Thus his message practically amounted to the advocacy of the proper use of one's vocation and capabilities; moreover, it was sprinkled with piquant references to the working classes and their revolutionary potentialities:

For this people is many, & ignorant, & passionate, confusing the good & evil together &, though often gentle in its own home, not very gentle when it rises as an angry flood to sweep away all alike, the elegant theories & delicate effronteries of its oppressors, and the carefully wrought schemes & the wise experience of its well wishers.²⁸

In this particular sermon Carpenter made a special reference to a lecture given by Professor Fawcett on 'Modern Socialism'. This was the first in a course of lectures he gave in the university in the Lent term, 1872, on 'the Programme of the International Society Economically Considered'. As a worthy Millite, Fawcett was opposed to what he called dependence upon the state as a virtually inexhaustible source of wealth, of which modern or continental Socialism was, in his view, the newest and the vilest form, while he praised co-operation as a form of self-help and as 'the greatest advance ever yet made in human improvement'. At a time when the International Working Men's Association was being denounced, however wrongly, as responsible for the Paris Commune – Karl Marx, who had assumed the control of the International, sought *ex post facto* to patronise the heroic Parisians, though in reality the International itself was on its last legs – Fawcett called for a cautious examination of its economic programme such as the nationalisation of land and industry, the legal regulation of the hours of labour, and free, national education of the people.

Carpenter for his part now pointed out that the workers had not

only declared for a regeneration of society but organised themselves into 'a vast and international union' so as to urge the adoption of reforms. 'It may easily be imagined', he wrote, 'that their schemes, formed hastily & under a sense of wrong, are in many respects crude & indeed impracticable. Yet we cannot but admire the nobility of mind which dictates such maxims as "The brotherhood of nations", and "the abolition of all standing armies".' He was against any attempt to ascribe evil motives to these workers and thus to exacerbate class antagonism, and concluded by echoing Mazzini: 'We have talked for centuries about our rights, let us go & fulfil the duties that we have not spoken of.'²⁹

Further glimpses of the progress of his heterodoxy can be obtained from some more extracts from his other sermons. A Whitmanite, he regretted that 'the current of Christianity was for a time at any rate strangely influenced' by 'a blind worship of the ascetic principle, a blind hatred of the body'.³⁰ He said that 'we must each one of us for ourselves make the distinction of what is a living faith in our hearts and what is not', and went on to argue:

If there is one thing certain in this world it is that it is better to be true than false. It does not matter whether truth lead you to be a Nonconformist or a Roman Catholic or anything else. It is a thousand times better to be a *true* Atheist than a *false* worshipper in the House of God.³¹

He was discovering a living faith in Whitman; indeed, his religious doubts were no longer disguised under the cloak of liberal Anglicanism. The death of Maurice in April 1872 perhaps made him less cautious in putting his doubts and aspirations into action. He wrote an epitaph in verse 'In Mortem F. D. Maurice':

Raise us to meet the strife,
Fearless and grand, because within thy life
Our lives are hidden – as is his to-day,
Thy servant who from sight hath passed away.³²

Although family life appears prosaic from a distance, it always stirs the passions of those directly concerned, and Carpenter was deeply involved in the affairs at Brighton. His sister Emily was married in 1865 to Edward Daubeney, son of a clergyman and a young army officer. In 1869 Charles of the Bengal Civil Service returned to

Brighton to marry. His young wife died in the following year after she had given birth to a son. In that year too Ellen was married to Francis Adams Hyett, one of Edward's close friends at Trinity Hall, who later became prominent in the public life of his native county, Gloucestershire. Lizzie who remained at home was much attached to Edward. In a letter commenting on his friend 'Stephie', she wrote: 'Papa came *ominously* & sat down by us, & neatly twisted the conversation to the poor unfortunate "Church"', and Stephie expressed her concern about her own brother's unbelief – 'I think dear old Ted, that you & I *never* misunderstand one another in these matters. I think I could go with you to any heights or depths.'³³ She was 'enraptured' over a set of poems Edward had sent to their mutual friend 'Jeannie': 'I am at this moment repeating over & over again those four verses beginning "I walk as one who, walking in the night" – it is quite an inspiration dear Ted, a marvellous thought beautifully expressed!!'³⁴ This poem he later published under the title 'Lamps Before Dawn'.³⁵ Indeed, he was awakening in the twilight of liberal England as 'lamps of men that grope within the dark flash quick and quicker through the morning grey'.

It was one thing to put his name to the memorial to Gladstone, but it was quite another to divest himself of all the protections and benefits guaranteed by the Church and to expose his whole life to the hazards of independence. It would be a great decision, and he was a cautious man by nature. Vocational anxieties and frustration delayed his action until he met 'a woman with decisive, originative, authentic mind' who served as his mentor at this critical moment.

This was Mrs Jane Olivia Daubeney, the daughter of Edward Villiards Rippingille, a well-known portrait painter,³⁶ to whom Carpenter referred as 'Olivia' in his autobiography, and about whom he wrote a life sketch entitled 'Francesca'. She was related to him through his sister Emily who had married into the Daubeney family. For some reason 'Olivia' was brought up by her two maiden aunts who lived in Italy. There she began 'an instinctive revolt against the cant and humbug of British piety'.³⁷ She married Major F. S. Daubeney, lived for a while at Gibraltar where her husband was stationed, but soon separated from him. She spent some time in a Lancashire town, handling subscriptions for the starving mill-hands

thrown out of work by the American Civil War, and looking after their children. She finally settled down in a London suburb where she lived with a girl who was something more than a companion.

She was about fifty but 'still retaining traces of an exceedingly handsome youth' when Carpenter met her in 1872. She took the trouble to go round the art galleries in London to choose the best pictures for him to see. 'Her conversations on literature and art, her criticisms of art work (and of my own efforts), her views on marriage, on religion', recalled Carpenter, 'were most helpful to me. They served to liberate my mind.' 'One thing is clear anyhow', read a letter from her: 'your present life is intolerable, *change it you must*.'³⁸

Indeed, his life as a clerical don had become intolerable. Feeling poorly and perhaps nervous, he asked for leave of absence for the Lent and Easter terms of 1873, and planned a long holiday in Italy which Olivia had strongly recommended him to undertake. 'Thank heaven I have leave till October, nine months – a boundless time – the time of the birth of a living soul', he wrote to Oates.³⁹

He set off in January for Rome. Early in February his mother was writing to 'The Revd. E. Carpenter' at Rome, telling him about 'our Carnival' at Brighton and 'the Ladies' Ball' that she had attended.⁴⁰ The stern matron could be as frivolous as she was insensitive to her son's spiritual needs. 'Horrid noises are going on in the street', he wrote to Oates from Rome: 'It is Carnival, least spontaneous & stupidest of amusements.'⁴¹ Yet his needs were largely satisfied in Italy. The wonderful sunlight that fell freely on the Campagna, the immense extent of Rome and its treasures that he explored, all impressed him deeply. He spent several weeks at Naples, and late in March he wrote to Oates from Capri, about 'that great cliff M. Solaro' and his visit to the temples at Paestum.⁴²

The works of Greek sculpture he saw at Paestum and elsewhere in Italy corroborated the impressions Whitman's poetry had left upon his mind. A hearty appreciation of 'the marvellous beauty and cleanliness of the human body as presented by the Greek mind. . . [and] the Greek ideal of the free and gracious life of man at one with nature and the cosmos – so remote from the current ideals of commercialism and Christianity' – in short, the sense of unity between the spiritual and the corporeal and the emancipation of the human body through that unity, he now believed, should be the

foundation of his new life. He had for so many years been groping his way towards this ideal, and he felt he had at last found it in Italy. Indeed, a change had taken place in him that would make his return to his former Cambridge life almost impossible.

Carpenter returned to England in June 1873 and at once proceeded to Cambridge in order to avail himself of the Clerical Disabilities Act of 1870, in the promotion of which, as we have seen, he had done his part. He had already written to Geldart, the Master, from Italy, and went to see him about his resigning orders. 'He [Geldart] is in a dreadful way; and the meeting comes on tomorrow!' he wrote to Oates.⁴³ He was determined, and the Master could not refuse.

In the autumn he was in Cannes, staying with his sister Lizzie and awaiting advice from Cambridge. In November he wrote to his father:

I have received letters from Cambridge, from Fawcett & from Beck, which have made me decide to return very early in December. . . They and others of the fellows have been discussing the legal bearing of my case and are of the opinion (which I have long held) that my *direct transference* at Christmas from my Clerical to a Lay fellowship is almost impossible. . . It is thought therefore (and I think so too) advisable that I should take the legal step of relinquishment of Orders (which will imply simultaneous resignation of my present fellowship) at once; and I shall then be in a position to be *reelected* into a Lay fellowship at Christmas or in June, if the Governing Body thinks fit. . . and as I shall take this present measure at the instance of a considerable portion of the Body I hope they will think fit; – but of course I cannot tell.⁴⁴

Evidently he was hoping for a lay fellowship, and this means that he had not been disappointed by Cambridge, though disillusioned with the Church. He at once hurried back, and it was then and there, it seems, that he realised the precariousness of his position in his college. He invited Oates to come and join the Christmas festivities: 'it may be my last opportunity. It is rather unlikely than otherwise that I shall survive another Christmas as fellow'.⁴⁵ On this occasion Carpenter seemed much embarrassed by some fellows railing at him for 'such tomfoolery' – the Dean's words – as troubling about his Orders.⁴⁶

In due time he completed the process of resigning from the

ministry and obtained a Deed of Relinquishment of Orders dated 27 June 1874.⁴⁷ In the same month the Governing Body of Trinity Hall was informed by the Master that Carpenter's fellowship was now vacant and he was eligible for a lay fellowship at Christmas when the election would take place. His resignation was formally reported to the Governing Body of his college in December,⁴⁸ but there was no more mention of him in College records: he was not elected as a lay fellow.

'What do you think? I cut off the fatal beard yesterday', he wrote to Oates shortly after the meeting of the Governing Body at Christmas: 'I look irreproachably respectable: in fact (O irony of truth!) my little nephew shouted out "O doesn't he look like the shopman" at the first sight of my complacent chin.' 'This morning was Beck's wedding', the letter continued: 'I have just come back – a sadder & wiser man. Indeed I feel older than Fate itself. . . Cook was there & spoke of you – & young Dilke. Young Clark is just made Fellow & was in full fig. Hopkins married the happy pair!'⁴⁹ This was the last news of the dons' life at Trinity Hall that Carpenter obtained at first hand.

Carpenter wrote in his autobiography that he had entered with great zeal into his academic life, but at some stage he had come to feel that the intellectual life of the university was 'a fraud and a weariness'.⁵⁰ He was, however, bound to Cambridge in a sort of love-hate relationship. Many a time his memories went back to a series of unspoken 'romances', and he himself would visit his old college to resurrect his past.

Now I am sitting by the window open upon the little back garden [of Trinity Hall] – where the rain, as of old, is pattering upon the leaves of the mulberry trees and the marigolds & fennel grow beneath in 'sweet confusion'. It is a dreadful little back garden to me – so full of reminiscences & associations, from Walt Whitman to the W.C.! I do not quite know whether I like it or whether I am afraid of it. But it is the same with all Cambridge. However I recant about the garden, for I really hold it a sacred spot, sacred over all pleasure & pain as some things are.⁵¹

His sexual life in Cambridge remained repressed and unspoken, and his narcissism may account for this reserved state of sexual desire.

In fact, he had very good looks. Walt Whitman, himself a handsome man, later admitted that Carpenter was 'the handsomest' of all his friends.⁵² When he was attracted to the ideal representation of the human body in the Greek sculpture, he may well have wished that it had been the reflection of himself. His first published work of poetry was appropriately entitled *Narcissus*, and was dedicated to his sister Lizzie, who was 'the fair nymph' under whose curse Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in the waters.

For a while he seriously considered the idea of taking up literature, and was soon pegging at *Moses, a Drama in Five Acts*, in which he made Aaron 'an infernal sneak' – 'he will be a scandal to priesthood for ever'.⁵³ The play was published in 1875, but fell flat. In 1909, in the altered political climate, a second edition came out under the title of *The Promised Land*: this was greeted by a Socialist newspaper as 'full of inspiration and hope for those who are working for the deliverance of the nations from the Pharaonic rule of modern capitalism'.⁵⁴

Perhaps Carpenter feigned to look upon himself as a man who stood alone, being far beyond his time, seeking for the realisation of the eternal dream of human love amidst all falsehood and superstition. 'A new state' would rise, declared his Moses, 'rise nearer heaven, with pure laws, simple customs, and sweet lives'.⁵⁵ Through his personal liberation – breaking with the Church – he probably felt that he had come to the prophetic height of a Moses. In view of the early collapse of his literary hopes, however, he now looked for some other means by which to express himself and assert his newly-gained freedom in the wilderness of Democracy.

THREE

A LECTURER FOR THE PEOPLE

CARPENTER'S JOURNEY back from Cannes in the early winter of 1873 was indeed 'memorable', for it was on this journey that in the course of a painful review of his vocational failures it suddenly occurred to him 'with a vibration through [his] whole body' that he should 'somehow go and make [his] life with the mass of the people and the manual workers'.¹ He at once took steps towards the fulfilment of this revelation. 'I am thinking of coming to Leeds as a Lecturer!' he wrote to Oates from Cambridge: 'Not just now for the post is filled; but I am bent on taking some work of that kind in large towns and I have promises for October.'²

In the summer of the following year, he was spending his last days at Trinity Hall, preparing for his new career as a lecturer for the common people. He now felt that he should address himself directly to Whitman, the poet of the people, from whose works, as we have seen, he had derived so much comfort and encouragement. In the early morning of 12 July he wrote a long letter to the poet, as if he was to affirm his liberation from the deadly weight of convention and respectability. The letter was treasured by Whitman who later confessed of it: 'I seem to get very near to his heart and he to mine.' It read:

My dear friend – It is dawn, but there is light enough to write by, and the birds in their old sweet fashion are chirping in the little College garden outside. My first knowledge of you is all entangled with that little garden. But that was six years ago; so you must not mind me writing to you now

because you understand, as I understand, that I am not drunk with *new* wine.

My chief reason for writing (so I put it to myself) is that I can't help wishing you should know that there are many here in England to whom your writings have been as the waking up to a new day. . . All that you have said, the thoughts that you have given us, are vital – they will grow – that is certain. You cannot know anything better than that you have spoken the word which is on the lips of God today. . . There is no hope, almost none, from English respectability. Money eats into it, to the core. The Church is effete. At school the sin which cannot be forgiven is a false quantity. The men are blindly material; even – to the most intellectual – Art and the desire for something like religion are only known as an emotional sense of pain. Yet the women will save us. I wish I could tell you what is being done by them – everywhere – in private and in public. The artisans – too are shaping themselves. While money is capering and grimacing over their heads they are slowly coming to know their minds; and exactly as they come to know their minds they come to the sense of power to fulfil them: and sweet will the day be when the toys are wrestled from the hands of children, and they too *have* to become men.

You hardly know, I think, in America (where the life, though as yet material, is so intense) what the relief is here to turn from the languid insanity of the well-fed to the clean hard lines of the workman's face. Yesterday there came (to mend my door) a young workman with the old divine light in his eyes – even I call it old though I am not thirty – and perhaps, more than all, he has made me write to you.

Because you have, as it were, given me a ground for the love of men I thank you continually in my heart. (– And others thank you though they do not say so.) For you have made men to be not ashamed of the noblest instinct of their nature. Women are beautiful; but, to some, there is that which passes the love of women.

It is enough to live wherever the divine beauty of love may flash on men; but indeed its real and enduring light seems infinitely far from us in this our day. Between the splendid dawn of Greek civilization and the high universal noon of Democracy there is a strange horror of darkness on us. We look face to face upon each other, but we do not know. At the last, it is enough to know that the longed-for realization is possible. . . Slowly – I think – the fetters are falling from men's feet, the cramps and crazes of the old superstitions are relaxing, the idiotic ignorance of class contempt is dissipating. If men shall learn to accept one another simply and without complaint, if they shall cease to regard themselves because the emptiness of vanity is filled up with love, and yet shall honor the free,

immeasurable gift of their own personality, delight in it and bask in it without false shames and affectations – then your work will be accomplished: and men for the first time will know of what happiness they are capable. . .

As to myself, I was in orders; but I have given that up – utterly. It was no good. Nor does the University do: there is nothing vital in it. Now I am going away to lecture to working men and women in the North. They at least desire to lay hold of something with a real grasp. And I can give something of mathematics and science. It may be of no use, but I shall see. . .

I have finished this at night. All is silent again; and as at first I am yours

Edward Carpenter³

Carpenter was one of the ‘peripatetic’ lecturers engaged in the University Extension Scheme which began in the autumn of 1873. James Stuart, its promoter and later Professor of Mechanism and Applied Mechanics at Cambridge, had issued a plea to make the University a truly national institution open to ‘all men’ and ‘all women’ including ‘a vast multitude of persons who cannot command. . . continuous leisure’: he was convinced that the two social groups most earnestly interested in education were women and working-men.⁴ Carpenter came into the movement at its earliest stage, and began a course of lectures on astronomy at Leeds, Halifax and Skipton in October 1874. ‘It was a curious subject for these towns’, he wrote, ‘where seldom a star could be seen. As far as the heavens were witness I might have told any fables.’ The bulk of his pupils consisted of the ‘young lady’ class. There were also elderly clerks and some clever young men, and ‘a very small sprinkling of manual workers’.⁵

During the first winter he gave two Sunday lectures for the Leeds Co-operative Society, one on ‘Materialism’ and the other on ‘The Life of Beethoven’. ‘Science has strode into the slumbering camp of religion & stands full armed in the midst. Is it peace or war?’ read the MS note of the first lecture;⁶ and this is the theme which was to become his major concern throughout his life. He spent two winters, 1874–5 and 1875–6, at Leeds, living in lodgings.

Life in Leeds had its attractions. The local leaders of the North of England Council for promoting the Higher Education of Women were all ‘advanced’ ladies. Carpenter and two other peripatetic

Cambridge lecturers living in Leeds, H. S. Foxwell, Fellow of St John's College, later Professor of Political Economy in London, and E. S. Thompson, Fellow of Christ's College, who edited Plato's *Meno*, were constantly invited by the ladies to hear their confidences. The young lecturers, who regularly met for dinner at each other's lodgings, 'had no end of fun comparing notes of local scandal'.⁷ In August 1876 Carpenter was back in Brighton, preparing a syllabus of his lectures. There he wrote to Oates: 'for me the Theodosias [Miss Theodosia Marshall, the leading advocate of Women's Suffrage in Leeds] and the Adelgrangers and Miss Walkers that were of old, and you. . . and the Tram cars are all gone to Tophet!'⁸

His circuit of lecturing now moved from Leeds to Nottingham and was extended to Barnsley, where in connection with the Mechanics Institute he gave a course of lectures on 'Modern Astronomical Discoveries'. Early in the following year he went to Hull, and during the Spring term he lodged at York where his lectures were supported mainly by the Quakers and other dissenting bodies who flourished in the Cathedral town. By now he seems to have fairly established himself as a University Extension lecturer in the North.

Through his experience in the North, he was led to hope for the emergence of the type of woman or workman who might, as he had wished in his earlier letter to Whitman, save him and society from commercialism and respectability. He now seriously considered visiting America in order to affirm his devotion to Whitman, and sent him another passionate letter dated 3 January 1876:

Dear friend, you have so infused yourself that it is daily more and more possible for men to walk hand in hand over the whole earth . . . You have made the earth sacred for me . . . I believe . . . that you have been the first to enunciate the law of purity and health which sooner or later must assert itself. After ages perhaps man will return *consciously* to the innocent joyous delight in his own natural powers and instincts which characterized the earlier civilizations . . . I feel that my work is to carry on what you have begun. You have opened the way: my only desire is to go onward with it.

He added that the rise of 'the working artisans' in England would bring about a new state of society in which the wealthier classes

would find their 'salvation' through 'the rough experience of their contact with the rude unaccommodating life below them (during the next few years)'. It is apparent from this that Carpenter linked the 'rude' life of the working-men with the virtues of primitive society that would invigorate effeminate modern civilisation.⁹

In April 1877 Carpenter crossed the Atlantic, and on 2 May he knocked at the door of 431 Stevens Street, Camden, New Jersey, where Whitman was then living with his brother. After a chat the two men crossed the Delaware river via the ferry to visit Philadelphia. 'The life of the streets and of the people was so near, so dear', wrote Carpenter: 'The men on the ferry steamer were evidently old friends; and when we landed on the Philadelphia side we were before long quite besieged. The man or woman selling fish at the corner of the street, the tramway conductor, the loafers on the pavement – a word of recognition from Walt, or as often from the other first.'¹⁰ They rambled through the city, using the tramcars. On that day Whitman took his guest to see Mrs Anne Gilchrist at her house in Philadelphia; thereafter they spent several evenings together, talking about Oriental literature, American democracy, women, slavery and manual labour. Carpenter was a witness of the 'tragic situation' in which Mrs Gilchrist found herself: she had transplanted herself and her family from England out of love for Whitman, but his relation to her did not go beyond that of kindness and consideration.¹¹

During his stay in Camden Carpenter visited a small farm on Timber Creek which belonged to a family who had also befriended Whitman. 'The "cat-birdy" quality of the life down there', as Whitman himself later said, contributed much to the recovery of his health after an attack of paralysis he had had before: 'The great thing for one to do when he is used up, is to go out to nature – throw yourself in her arms – submit to her destinies.'¹² This is the great lesson Carpenter learned from Whitman, and he appeared much impressed with the wonders of a little pond surrounded by trees, Whitman's favourite haunt by the Creek – a natural setting for bathing and sun-bathing and open-air life in general.

In the course of his American tour Carpenter visited some celebrities in New England. He stayed a night with Emerson at Concord, and enjoyed his talk as they walked through the garden or sat in his book-lined study. Emerson showed him his own translation of the

Upanishad, and his conversation was altogether 'very literary in character'. But his guest noticed that his view of Whitman was rather sour, for he called him 'a wayward, fanciful man'. A similar opinion was expressed by Oliver Wendell Holmes whom Carpenter saw at his house in Boston: 'The poets coquette with Nature and weave garlands of roses for her; but Whitman goes at her like a great hirsute man – so, it won't do.'¹³ He also visited John Burroughs at Esopus on the Hudson and stayed two nights there. On 5 June Burroughs wrote to Mrs Gilchrist: 'I like him very much – a modest sensible man and a great admirer of W.W.'¹⁴ For the rest he found Niagara quite Whitmanesque in spirit, and on the whole enjoyed the rough freedom and independence he encountered in America. After another brief visit to Whitman, he went up to Boston, embarked there on SS *Siberia*, and returned to England early in July.

'I had a splendid time in America', he wrote to Oates in August: 'Saw Walt Whitman, Emerson, Holmes and all sorts of people. Of course W.W. was *the* attraction: and, what is not the matter of course, he came up to my expectations. He is magnificent, and we became great friends (I stayed in the house with him for a week).'¹⁵ Carpenter had just been to Cambridge, looking up books and collecting common-room gossip. He was soon to resume University Extension lectures, this time at York, Sheffield and Chesterfield, with a new course on 'light and sound' added to the old one of astronomy. He also wrote to Whitman about his elaborate preparations for lectures with 'a whole lot of apparatus . . . to illustrate "sound" – organ pipes and tuning forks, and speaking tubes, and piano wires stretched on sound board, &c'.¹⁶

In December Whitman received another 'splendid letter' from Carpenter who expressed his admiration for 'Children of Adam' and his hearty appreciation of its bearings on Democracy. 'I am very well and happy', he went on:

My term's work is over and I am going away for a month, to Cambridge and to Brighton. I should like to describe to you the life of these great manufacturing towns like Sheffield. I think you would be surprised to see the squalor and raggedness of them. Sheffield is finely situated, magnificent hill country all round about, and on the hills for miles and miles (on one side of the town) elegant villa residences – and in the valley below one

enduring cloud of smoke, and a pale-faced teeming population, and tall chimneys and ash heaps covered with squalid children picking them over, and dirty alleys, and courts and houses half roofless, and a river running black through the midst of them. It is a strange and wonderful sight. There is a great deal of distress just now – so many now being out of work – and it is impossible to pass through the streets without seeing it obvious in some form or other. (A man burst into floods of tears the other day when I gave him a bit of silver.) But each individual is such a mere unit in a great crowd, and they go and hide their misery away – easily enough.¹⁷

The last line quoted here moved Whitman very much: ‘That is a wonderful tribute paid to the common man’, he said, ‘It’s that sort of thing in men which makes the race safe – which will finally see, assert, demand, produce, the new state, church – the new social compact. I never have any doubts of the future when I look at the common man.’ Especially he liked Carpenter, for ‘the best of Carpenter is in his humanity: he manages to stay with the people. . . I don’t know of another living literary man of like standing who could write a letter like this.’¹⁸

In Sheffield Carpenter lodged at the top end of Glossop Road, in the better part of the town. Yet ‘for three consecutive days it rained blacks mingled with water! . . . Then my lodging-place people were most doleful – three timid little maids, like bunny-rabbits.’¹⁹ So he fled and took rooms at Chesterfield for the following term. From there he again reported progress to Whitman:

My winter’s work of lecturing is over now: I have had a very pleasant time of it – though leading a rather solitary life. I was lecturing in three towns – York, Sheffield and Chesterfield. I made the last my headquarters, and then went once a week to York, twice to Sheffield and gave a lecture every week in Chesterfield. The people write answers to the questions in the lecture and then send up papers which I look over and return to them. It is interesting work because one has all sorts of people – except the poorest.²⁰

Carpenter found his students, especially those in his evening classes, enthusiastic: many of them even bought telescopes. In the winter of 1878–9 he again lodged in Sheffield and lectured at Nottingham, Hull and Chesterfield. He added a new course on ‘Pioneers of

Science' which was popular, as he said, on account of 'its more discursive character'. He crammed the whole history of science in twelve lectures, from the nebulous beginnings of Alexandrian science to the history of the steam engine and the Darwinian theory of evolution and concluded that 'the destruction of one mode of thought and the substitution of a more scientific one can never be unfavourable to the true spirit of religion'.²¹

In October 1879 he wrote to Oates from Sheffield: 'I have *Nottingham* Monday evenings (staying overnight till Tuesday) – *Chesterfield* Wednesday or Thursday – *Hull* Friday evenings, staying of course till Saturday – so that I am much hemmed in. . . I have a lecture on Abraham Lincoln the other night: it was followed by the presentation to me of a flaming testimonial (Oh dear! what shall I do with it?).'²² The testimonial bearing about eighty signatures expressed the hope that 'you may be long spared to continue to impart the knowledge of that science which, when understood, must tend to impress on mankind the greatness of an Almighty Being'.²³

Behind the popularity and deference he had gained among his students, he had been enduring the pains of another crisis of his life. It is true that while he was at Leeds his friendship with Oates had deepened into 'intimacy', but he had not established any real contact with working-men which, he had hoped, would change his entire life. Indeed, as he wrote later, 'the years after leaving Cambridge, and of the life in the Northern Towns, were again absolutely empty'.²⁴ Moreover, the feeling of emptiness was aggravated by his growing awareness of the uncertainties of his future.

A policy of retrenchment had been forced upon the work of University Extension when in 1876 a conservative clergyman became its secretary. In fact, Carpenter had no real base for his lecturing work, for unlike most of the other lecturers he no longer held a fellowship. He was worried, and his nerves were 'in a quite shattered condition'. His eyes refused to read, and this exacerbated his anxiety lest he should fail to prepare the work before him. Lecturing itself was physically as well as mentally exhausting, as he even had to make the oxygen gas himself for the lantern. He suffered from insomnia: 'there were all the pupils and their faces, and their needs

and their personalities; there were the tiresome patrons and committee people, in endless dance on my brain'.²⁵

The crisis was also deeply rooted in his nature, in his emotional ties with his family. In March 1876 his eldest brother Charles died at Nagpore as the result of an accident. The marriage of Lizzie in 1878 was perhaps equally distressing to Edward. Her husband was Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Charles Barnston Daubeney, a man aged sixty-seven, who had lost his second wife two years before. It was apparently a marriage of convenience on both sides, for Lizzie herself was nearly forty. There were still three unmarried sisters, Sophie, Alice and Dora, remaining in Brighton. Edward later recalled:

I went home in the summers to Brighton, to see my mother's large plaintive eyes expressing very much what I felt – yet the wall between her and myself was never really overpassed; to see my sisters, for the most part unmarried, wearing out their lives and their affectional capacities with nothing to do, and with nothing to care for. They were suffering as I was.²⁶

He was suffering, indeed. 'On one occasion indeed in my desperation', he wrote,

I went on a visit to Paris – to see if by any means I might make a discovery there! But the commercial samples of the Boulevards, though some of them deeply interested me, were nothing for my need: and I came back to England feeling hopeless and tired out. In the winters again I lived and worked among good enough people, in whom I was interested – but they too were only afar from me.²⁷

Obviously the object of his adventures in Paris was male prostitution. Frustration, remorse, and tension were the signs of an impasse into which he had been led by his own inability to express himself sexually in a satisfactory way. He desperately needed someone, some man, some working-man preferably, who would share his ideal of love. For the realisation of this urgent need he had to find yet another mode of living, possibly of an open-air sort. Did not Whitman tell him to 'go out to nature' to 'submit to her destinies'? His peripatetic lecturing had brought him near the life of working-men, but not near enough. Indeed, he would have to throw himself right into the arms of nature, if he was to be saved.

FOUR

TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

I do enjoy this outdoor life and digging potatoes – and never mean to abandon either again! I am living with a man – the best friend I ever had or could think to have – an iron worker, scythe riveter, and his little family. He often says I wish Walt Whitman would come over here. Below my window here there is a wooded bank running down to some water, and beyond again about 2 miles off the hilly undulating line of the Derbyshire moors – from which there comes a broad fresh breeze – like being near the sea.¹

THUS reported Carpenter to his old friend in Camden in July 1880; the joy of personal liberation described here contrasted remarkably with the tone of despondency and strain that had characterised his life only a year or two before. Something must have happened in these years that would explain the secret of his self-fulfilment, which was essential before he could write *Towards Democracy*, a poem of good tidings not only for himself but for humanity at large.

‘The year 1879 was in many ways the dim dawn or beginning of a new life to me’, wrote Carpenter in his autobiography.² In that year he began experimenting with vegetarianism: he felt he was getting much benefit from giving up wine and beer and eating a comparatively small quantity of meat. He engaged in manual work: for two summer months of that year, he worked every morning in a joiner’s shop in Brighton, making panel doors. Above all he tried the open-air life, and this was made comparatively easy by the

proximity of the Derbyshire moors to Sheffield, which now became the major centre of his lecturing work.

The attraction of Sheffield was to be found not merely in its natural surroundings but also in the people. 'A heartiness about them' induced Carpenter to take root among them. Through his University Extension lectures which now covered music, and also through his own 'explorations' in the city, he was soon accepted into the actual society of the manual workers. 'Railway men, porters, clerks, signalmen, ironworkers, coach-builders, Sheffield cutlers, and others came within my ken', he recalled, 'and from the first I got on excellently and felt fully at home with them – and I believe, in most cases, they with me. I felt I had come into, or at least in sight of, the world to which I belonged, and to my natural habitat.'³ He admired the Sheffield workers' quaint manners and customs which were little affected by supposed Victorian standards:

Foot racing and the running of handicaps were very much in vogue, and I used to stroll down by myself on many a summer afternoon and witness these contests. The races were run, and probably this too, was an old tradition – as nearly as possible naked, or in a state of nature. A pair of light running shoes, and an almost invisible strip between the legs constituted the only covering – and many of the runners being men and youths of fine figure and development the effect was proportionably interesting.⁴

One evening, some time early in 1879, a man, a muscular, powerful man of about his own age, approached him after a lecture and asked him to come and see him in his cottage on a farm which belonged to a friend, a young farmer Charles Fox. Carpenter accepted the invitation and visited the little hamlet of Bradway a few miles south of Sheffield, where he saw the two friends, Albert Fearnough, the scythe maker mentioned in the letter to Whitman already quoted, and Charles Fox, the farmer, who also had attended his classes. Fearnough seemed indeed to Carpenter to be an ideal man. 'In many ways he was delightful to me, as the one "powerful uneducated" and natural person I had as yet, in all my life, met with', he wrote in his memoirs. There was 'a touch of pathos in his inarticulate ways and in his own sense of inability to compete with the cheapjack commercialism of the day'.⁵ He lived in his tiny cottage with his wife, 'a good patient worker', and two children.

Charles Fox, a bachelor, lived on a farm left by his father, with an unmarried cousin as his housekeeper, and her son as his farm-lad, and also with his own brother who was mentally deficient. On many week-ends Carpenter went up to the farm for tea, roamed about the fields, and later even learned the art of milking and attending the calving of a cow. Behind Charles's inexpressive face, and hidden by his beetle-like gait, he discovered an original mind, 'a wonderful broad humanity' which flashed now and then in his philosophy of contentment. He pitied those who would go about fussing to get on, and his remarks often revealed his peculiar cynicism in which God and His creature the Devil comforted each other.⁶

Charles apparently had some Socialist connections. In a letter addressed to Carpenter while the latter was away at Brighton, he wrote about his work and his friends: 'Have been busy lately making a well in the garden. Have planted a good many ferns and mosses about it. Have had several visits from Riley &c. I and Fearnough visited the Commonwealth on 18th. . . Riley lent us some papers called the "Socialist" & the "Yankee Letters"'.⁷ Through Charles and his friend Riley, Carpenter obtained an insight into Socialism in Sheffield which was then associated with the fame of John Ruskin.

He briefly informed Whitman of his new interest: 'in a month I hope to be at look out in the country near here - at first on some land of Ruskin's'.⁸ The land in question belonged to the St George's Guild, which was founded by Ruskin in 1875 so as to put into practice the leading principle of his own: 'there is NO WEALTH BUT LIFE', and which had something of the knightly-monastic order in its organisation. When Ruskin authorised the Guild to purchase a farm of about thirteen acres at Totley near Sheffield in March 1876, he did so at the request of a group of 'Mutual Helpers' in Sheffield - about a dozen of them - who called themselves Communists. Prominent among them were Riley - William Harrison Riley - former editor of the *International Herald*, the organ of the British section of the International Working Men's Association, and founder of the Mutual Help Association, who had spent some time in America, and Joseph Sharpe, an old Chartist, a harpist by occupation, who was later to be seen working, in red scarf and old great-coat, in a corner of one of Carpenter's own fields. Their original idea

was that while continuing their various activities in and around Sheffield they would give their spare time to communal work at the farm, would share its produce in some rational way, and possibly at some future date would start a school there, along Owenite lines. Soon, however, dissensions arose, especially as the promoters of the co-operative farm, being chiefly bootmakers, ironworkers, opticians and such like, knew little about agriculture. 'Peace and fraternity were turned into missiles and malice', wrote Carpenter. According to another version of the story, it was Riley himself who was the cause of the trouble, standing in the way of the members of the Mutual Improvement Club who wanted to buy back the farm from Ruskin.⁹ 'The wives entered into the fray', read Carpenter's version, 'and the would-be garden of Eden became such a scene of confusion that Ruskin had to send down an ancient retainer of his (with a pitchfork instead of a flaming sword) to bar them all out.'¹⁰ The 'retainer' referred to here was Riley himself, who, however, did not get on well with another 'very old-fashioned and John Bull-like retainer of the Ruskin family'. So he withdrew and returned to America.¹¹ 'Personally, I would not like to belong to a community of under a million people!' wrote Carpenter, 'I think with that number one might feel safe, but with less there would be a great danger of being *watched*.'¹²

Ruskin had been attracted to Sheffield by the opportunities for artistic craftsmanship offered by local trades; and he had set up a museum to house works of art and industry at Walkley. Carpenter, interested as he also was in the Sheffield workers though not for the same reasons, wrote to the Master of the Guild enclosing a gift of £2. Ruskin, rather puzzled at Carpenter's effusion, replied: 'I cannot guess, from yours what position of life you are in – though I see you to be a gentleman and scientific, &c in "connection" with Cambridge – but what not? – but it is curious you don't tell me more, and that you should have worked with me so long without telling me so much!'¹³ Carpenter remained reticent perhaps deliberately, and took care not to be drawn too closely into Ruskin's mediaevalist utopia. By this time the experiment of a co-operative farm had come to an end, and Carpenter's interest in it had also waned.

His visits to the farm at Bradway became more and more frequent.

After all, Fearnough and Fox represented 'a life close to Nature', and Carpenter now decided to live among them. Accordingly a plan was worked out by which Fearnough moved to another cottage at Totley and Carpenter joined him and his family there. This was in May 1880, and in March 1881 when another cottage on Fox's farm became vacant, they all returned to Bradway. From this time on, the life he led there was 'so native, so unrestrained' and seemed to liberate 'the pent-up emotionality of years'.¹⁴

He may have toyed with the idea of co-operation in his new life, independently from Ruskin's farm. P. Arunáchalam, a Ceylonese friend who had studied at Christ's College, Cambridge, wrote to him about this time: 'I am much pleased to hear you have at last reached the goal you are struggling for. It must be a great delight to you to feel you are in the right place and on the right track. . . . What is the scheme of co-operation you are working at? What does Ruskin propose to do with his farm now?'¹⁵ As soon as he settled at Bradley, Carpenter wrote to Oates about the Fearnoughs: 'of course I share the gruel with them. . . . We *all* dress in rags. Come!'¹⁶ He now seemed interested in co-operation less as a system of communal experiment than as a moral or spiritual basis of human existence.

It was probably about this time that he achieved the long-delayed fulfilment of his basic sexual needs. 'Gradually, though slowly, I came to find that there were others like myself', he wrote in his confessional writings about his sexual life. Here he was referring to the period of the beginning of his rustic life. 'I made a few special friends', he went on:

and at last it came to me occasionally to sleep with them and to satisfy my imperious need by mutual embraces and emissions. Before this happened, however, I was once or twice on the brink of despair and madness with repressed passion and torment. Meanwhile from the first, my feeling, physically, towards the female sex was one of indifference, and later on, with the more special development of sex desires, one of positive repulsion. Though having several female friends, whose society I like and to whom I am sincerely attached, the thought of marriage or cohabitation with any such has always been odious to me. . . . Now - at the age of 37 - my ideal of love is a powerful, strongly built man, of my own age or rather younger - preferably of the working class. Though having solid sense and character,

he need not be specially intellectual. If endowed in the latter way, he must not be too glib or refined. Anything effeminate in a man, or anything of the cheap intellectual style, repels me very decisively. I had never had to do with actual paederasty, so called. My chief desire in love is bodily nearness or contact, as to sleep naked with a naked friend; the special sexual, though urgent enough, seems a secondary matter. . . I am an artist by temperament and choice, fond of all beautiful things especially the male human form; of active, slight, muscular build; and sympathetic, but somewhat indecisive, character, though possessing self-control.¹⁷

In this testimonial Carpenter was apparently describing his feelings of about 1881 when he was thirty-seven and when he settled at Bradway with Fearnough and Fox. By then he seems to have been able to satisfy his ideal of love to a large extent.

As we have seen, his emotional life was still very much bound up with his Brighton family. His mother watched her unmarried daughters with some concern. Her husband's health, both mental and physical, was declining by this time. Then on 25 January 1881 Mrs Carpenter developed bronchitis after a chill, and died very suddenly. Her death deeply affected Edward. Although 'there had been. . . so little in the way of spoken confidence between us, we were united by a strong invisible tie'.¹⁸ He was free of her, but he was dismayed and sorry; memories of his mother became sacred.

Carpenter was then seriously interested in Eastern religion and began its study in earnest. His father had written some profound lines on Nirvana,¹⁹ and he had heard Whitman and Emerson speak on a similar subject. He himself had been interested in the difference between the Oriental and Occidental mind as to the meaning of creation. Indeed, a lively interest in Eastern religion and thought had been part and parcel of the Romantic reaction against eighteenth-century rationalism and materialism, and many volumes of the sacred literature of the East had become available in translation. In 1880 or 81,²⁰ Carpenter received a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* from Arunáchalam, now in the Ceylon Civil Service, who while criticising British rule for its 'Star Chamber style', declared that he would champion the cause of Buddhism and Hinduism: 'I vowed I would return to the simple and beautiful customs of our forefathers.'²¹

Now this great epic, in the form of a dialogue between Krishna

and the warrior Arjuna, develops the idea of a love that will unite the finite and the infinite. Krishna says he is 'the One source of all', and 'to be and not to be, fear and freedom from fear. . . are the conditions of mortals and they all arise from me'. Serene heavenly virtues are assured for those who worship him in adoration of love. 'When lust and anger and greediness are no more, and he is free from the thought "this is mine"; then this man has risen on the mountain of the Highest. . . His love is one for all creation, and he has supreme love for me.'²² Indeed, the *Gita* gave Carpenter 'a key-note'. He felt that he was in touch with a kind of super-consciousness, and a sense of harmony and universal sympathy appeared to prevail; his previous experiences were all given 'their place, their meaning and their outlet in expression'.²³

Early in 1881 he became conscious that a mass of material was forming within himself, 'imperatively demanding expression'. The death of his mother gave him a sense of revelation. He thought that there was growing within him 'a region transcending in some sense the ordinary bounds of personality':

my own idiosyncrasies of character – defects, accomplishments, limitations, or what not – appeared of no importance whatever – an absolute freedom from mortality, accompanied by an indescribable calm and joy. I also immediately saw, or rather *felt*, that this region of self existing in me existed equally (though not always equally *consciously*) in others. . . A field was opened in which all might meet, in which all were truly equal.

This was his 'Democracy'; and 'Freedom and Equality' became his key words.²⁴

In April 1881 he gave up all his lecturing work, the last remnant of the early associations that had tied him down to the world of duties and action, and concentrated on his writing. Now the Yoga of vision was opened to him. He built 'a sort of wooden sentinel-box' in the garden of the cottage at Bradway.

There, or in the fields and the woods, all that spring and summer, and on through the winter, by day and sometimes by night, in sunlight or in rain, by frost and snow and all sorts of grey and dull weather, I wrote TOWARDS DEMOCRACY – or at any rate the first and longer poem that goes by that name. By the end of 1881 this was finished.²⁵

In the earlier part of 1882 he was still engaged on the work, and in March he wrote to Whitman:

I have about finished what I am writing at present. It is in paragraphs, some short (half a line or so), some long, in the ordinary prose form, tho' poetical in character. It is a good deal made up of previous writings of the last five or six years *squeezed out* – a drop or two here and there. I have thought for some time of calling it *Towards Democracy* and I do not see any reason for altering the title – though the word *Democracy* does not often occur in it.²⁶

It is not known how Whitman responded to what he might well have regarded as an imitation or even plagiarism of his own work. Carpenter, however, came to liken the influence of Whitman to that of the sun or the winds. '*Leaves of Grass* "filtered and fibred" my blood', he wrote later:

but I do not think I ever tried to imitate it or its style. . . . Whatever resemblance there may be between the rhythm, style, thoughts, constructions, &c., of the two books, must I think be set down to a deeper similarity of emotional atmosphere and intention in the two authors. . . . Anyhow our temperaments, standpoints, antecedents, &c., are so entirely diverse and opposite that, except for a few points, I can hardly imagine that there is much resemblance to be traced.²⁷

He was more or less right, but perhaps not entirely, for Whitman, though a literary giant, was not 'the sun or the winds', and the problem of influence will still remain.

In 1883 a slender volume of 119 pages, entitled *Towards Democracy*, came out anonymously. It was saved from general neglect by a notice in the *Cambridge Review* by George C. Moore Smith of St John's College. It was distinguished, said the reviewer, by 'a delicate touch which, unless we err, differs widely from Whitman's style, and it is directly concerned with those social problems which present themselves to us Englishmen'. 'The marvellously sympathetic pictures . . . of ordinary people' were commended, while 'the crude statement of complete equality of mankind' was condemned.²⁸ Smith, himself a University Extension lecturer in the North, and later Professor of English Literature at the University of Sheffield, must have known Carpenter personally.

'FREEDOM at last! . . . I wipe a mirror and place it in your hands' – with these words began Carpenter's hymn of the soul and its 'slow disentanglement'. To a large extent it was autobiographical. The millennium he spoke of was apparently derived from his own freedom attained at Bradway: 'a millennium on earth – a millennium not of riches, nor of mechanical facilities, nor of intellectual facilities, nor absolutely of immunity from disease, nor absolutely of immunity from pain; but a time when men and women all over the earth shall ascend and enter into relation with their bodies – shall attain freedom and joy'.²⁹ The common people, not as an impersonal idea but as the name for his neighbours and friends, became the source of his strength. 'If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing', he wrote.³⁰ To him Democracy was something emotional or spiritual rather than institutional, and was based on a recognition, as in the *Gita*, of divine self in the body and soul of every man and woman. 'Of that which exists in the Soul, political freedom and institutions of equality, and so forth, are but the shadows (necessarily thrown); and Democracy in States or Constitutions but the shadow of that which first expresses itself in the glance of the eye or the appearance of the skin.'³¹ It was also equality of the living and the dead, as he felt it when he threw himself in the spiritual embrace of his mother who was no more: 'Cling fast, O Mother, and hold me: clasp thy fingers over my face and draw me to thee for ever?'³²

Having had a glimpse of his millennium, he now looked upon England and her earth: 'The Earth is for you, and all that is therein – save what anyone else can grab.'³³ He tore veils off her face, and exposed beneath her 'smooth-faced Respectability' the ugly feature of producing cheap goods out of the toil of ill-paid youth. 'Do you grab interest on Money and lose all interest in Life?' he asked in Ruskinian form.³⁴ There followed an eloquent indictment of 'the insane greed of riches' which tortured 'the loving beasts', drove people away from nature, and sought to bind men together by laws and coercion. Above all, there was 'the puppet dance of gentility' that had been the feature of his Brighton and his Cambridge. 'I choke!' he cried. However, 'One instant struggle! and lo! It is Over! – daylight!'³⁵

Then he told his readers how he achieved his own salvation and

exhorted them to do the same. They should descend 'through this wretched maze of shams for the solid ground', and live 'close to the earth and the people'. And he declared: 'Lovers of all handicrafts and of labor in the open air, confessed passionate lovers of your own sex, Arise!'³⁶ The body was now affirmed as 'a root of the soul', and equality became a means of knowing one's self. All distinctions and all attainments would be lost in this great ocean of democracy. Indeed, there was a presentiment of his *England Arise!*

Government and laws and police then fall into their places – the earth gives her own laws; Democracy just begins to open her eyes and peep! and the rabble of unfaithful bishops, priests, generals, landlords, capitalists, lawyers, kings, queens, patronisers and polite idlers goes scuttling down into general oblivion. Faithfulness emerges, self-reliance, self-help, passionate comradeship.³⁷

Freedom was millennial; the whole history was 'a preparation' for it. At the end there was joy, blissful joy. Carpenter's own life at Bradway was the realisation in a small way of this vision of emancipation. He heard 'the sound of the whetting of scythes', and dreamed a dream of eternal happiness: 'Blessed who sleeps with him, blessed who eats walks talks, blessed who labors in the field beside him; blessed whoever, though he be dead, shall know him to be eternally near.'³⁸ 'I am the poet of hitherto unuttered joy', he continued: 'Children go with me, and rude people are my companions. I trust them and they me. Day and night we are together and are content.'³⁹

His spirit circled around himself – 'I enter the young prostitute's chamber, where *he* [italics mine] is arranging the photographs of fashionable beauties and favorite companions, and stay with him; we are at ease and understand each other.'⁴⁰ He admired 'the bathers in the late twilight' advancing 'naked under the trees by the water-side', and sang the song of his own body.⁴¹ He became more and more open in alluding to homosexual love. 'For the glorified face of him I love: the long days out alone together in the woods, the nights superb of comradeship and love'.⁴² Indeed, his democracy and freedom were expounded in the supreme sense of brotherly and comradesly love.

Towards Democracy provided the starting-point and essence of all his later work. It was published by John Heywood of Manchester at the author's own expense; only 500 copies were printed, and at the end of two years there remained 100 unsold. By this time he was in the midst of the Socialist revival in which millenarian and revolutionary creeds were publicly advocated as the panacea for the evils of industrial Britain. Political realignment was attempted and sectarianism emerged, as democracy, the cause of the common people, advanced.

FIVE

THE SOCIALIST REVIVAL

WHEN Carpenter was seeking a new life through his contacts with working-men, another Cambridge graduate, who had seen many weaknesses in British capitalism and the Empire, was making the acquaintance of Karl Marx and studying *Capital* in earnest. This was Henry Mayers Hyndman, a city man, who somehow managed to combine an active propaganda for Socialism with speculation on the stock exchange. His earlier visions of Tory Democracy had received a fatal blow from the death of Disraeli and also from the hostility the working-class electorate had shown him in the 1880 election. His reaction was swift and ingenious: he now sought to revive Chartism under his own leadership, and in June 1881, launched 'a New Party', the Democratic Federation, which soon developed into a Socialist body. Hyndman was often seen provoking his working-class supporters and middle-class allies by predicting an imminent revolution at public meetings while wearing his customary top hat and frock-coat. Carpenter would certainly have disapproved of these tactics which arose, as it seemed, from a curious mixture of elitism and political impatience. He soon crossed the path of Hyndman and the group of conspirators around him, and in due course was drawn into the revolutionary vortex of the day.

However, he had to square accounts with capitalism in his own way. His father, who had been successful on the stock exchange, died in April 1882, and left a total of £20,744. The estate consisted mostly

in investments in overseas securities, and had now to be divided up equally among his nine surviving children and one child of his deceased son. Edward, one of the executors of his will, bore the main burden of this unenviable task, and stayed at Brighton for four or five months, 'selling, negotiating, dividing, transferring without end'. The largest single item was a holding of 926 shares of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and among the other stocks and shares disposed of by him were those of several other American and foreign railway companies as well as a certain amount of British stock. Through the work of dividing up the inheritance, he obtained a fresh insight into 'the futility and irksomeness of the old order' and the 'immorality' of the rentier's life. Although his work as an executor dragged on for several years, he returned to Bradway as soon as he had got over the major part of his task.

With part of the money he now inherited, which on his own reckoning amounted to some £6,000 (combining various legacies), he was determined to set himself up as a market-gardener on his own plot of land. By Easter 1883 he came to terms for the purchase of three fields he had found at Millthorpe, half-way between Sheffield and Chesterfield, in easy walking distance from the moorland. A house was soon built and furnished, a horse was bought, and in October he and the Fearnoughs moved in. Five months later he wrote to Whitman:

have about seven acres altogether [;] we are gardening about two acres; fruit, flowers and vegetables; have about two and a half acres grass and about the same quantity part wheat for ourselves and part oats for the horse. . . There is a quite old flour mill here, from which the place no doubt takes its name; very quaint old wooden wheels and cogs - the stream which feeds it runs at the bottom of my three fields - lots of wood and water all about the valley.¹

At Millthorpe, 'a small hamlet of a dozen houses or so', there was not a single villa to admire nor a church except one 'quite amiably remote'; and he soon mixed with the villagers, mostly manual workers, and gained their confidence. He now felt he had escaped from the worst features of civilisation, 'respectability and cheap intellectualism',² and had secured a firm basis, derived from the earth and its people, for his work for Socialism.

His earliest declaration for Socialism can be found in a lecture entitled 'Co-operative Production and How Leclaire Solved the Problem' which he delivered in March 1883 on behalf of the Sheffield Secular Society. The Frenchman E. J. Leclaire, a house-painter, had founded a Mutual Help Association with a degree of workers' participation in the profit and even in the management of his firm, and his modest attempt at co-operation had attracted some attention in England. (J. S. Mill was enthusiastic about it.) Carpenter felt that Leclaire's experiment would illustrate 'the wide-spread presentiment of Change' that was most strongly expressed in the relations of capital and labour. Indeed, co-operation was now expounded as the social and economic form of his egalitarian sentiments that had been given a poetical shape in *Towards Democracy*.³

In spite of his lecture for a local Secular Society, however, there is no evidence that Carpenter was much impressed by secularism or its leaders apart from Mrs Annie Besant, whose freethought pamphlet *Giordano Bruno* he had used as a source for his University Extension lectures.⁴ He must have known Edward Aveling, a science teacher and art critic, who had come into prominence in the movement some years before and who wrote a review of *Towards Democracy* in *Progress* which he then edited. Aveling called its author 'an English Walt Whitman' and approvingly wrote that 'he has caught the significance of the bliss of being: he is a worshipper of the body'. He remarked however that the author 'has chosen labor apparently as his luxury' and criticised the 'unpoetical language' he found there.⁵ By now Aveling himself was well on the road to Socialism: he was soon to become the common-law husband of Eleanor Marx, one of the two surviving daughters of Karl Marx, and as such, a protégé of Friedrich Engels. But again there is no evidence that Carpenter was in contact with Aveling, and he wrote nothing about him. He was not a man who would indulge in sharp criticisms of those with whom he disagreed, and complete silence may have been a sign of profound disapproval. Disapproval could perhaps have been due to adverse opinions about Aveling's moral character circulated among some of Carpenter's own friends and acquaintances such as Mrs Besant, Hyndman and Olive Schreiner.

He studied Hyndman's *England for All*, 'a most excellent little

book' as he called it, which supplied him with economic arguments that would explain the cause of alienation. The book, which had been distributed at the inaugural conference of the Democratic Federation, was indeed the curtain-raiser for the Socialist revival in the 1880s. Soon a sixpenny edition was published, and its copies found their way to many of those who later became prominent in the Socialist movement. Marx's oft-quoted displeasure at the suppression of his name in this book, which relied heavily upon his analysis of capitalism, is quite understandable. In fact Hyndman made an attempt to summarise Marx's *Capital* in two chapters dealing with labour and capital. But it is fair to say that he also suppressed many of his other sources. He was eclectic enough to quote from Henry Fawcett's *Manual of Political Economy* for his definition of capital, and his own analysis began with an account of the Ricardian theory of labour value. While he made almost a verbatim translation of part of Marx's chapter on 'General Law of Capitalist Accumulation', he was quite ready to throw in Ricardo and Cobbett, especially Cobbett in *Two Penny Trash*, in order to make Marx's analysis of surplus value more palatable to the English reader. Moreover, he condemned capitalism because it was immoral as it was devoid of consideration for human value. And he managed to incorporate Marx's analysis into his own schemes for 'English democracy' that would involve a reorganisation of the Empire with an Imperial Parliament and an Empire customs Union. However defective and misleading Hyndman's rendering of it may have been, Marx's theory of surplus value caught on and became 'a definite text for the social argument', as Carpenter put it. 'The instant I read that chapter in *England for All* – the mass of floating impressions, sentiments, ideas, etc., in my mind fell into shape – and I had a clear line of social reconstruction before me'.⁶

The result was his *Modern Money-Lending and the Meaning of Dividends*, a tract published by John Heywood in 1883. Like his other writings it was intensely personal. Indeed, ironically enough, the credit side of his account book at the time teemed with entries of dividends and interest, including those for loans repaid by his sisters such as '19 March 1884 – E. Daubeney – loans repaid with interest £25: £555-0-0'. He now examined the matter to see if there was any dividing line between legitimate interest and odious usury. He

did not say so, but Emily must have needed money to invest. If so, the interest of £25 must have come from a capitalist making his profit. In the text itself, the capitalist, a clothier, produced coats that contained so much cloth and so much added labour, and in this way the reader would soon find himself in the classical world of Marx's *Capital* and surplus value. Himself a shareholder, the author now declared: 'my profits come, and must come, from the labour of others. They arise, and can only arise, from the fact that some portion of the labour connected with my business goes unremunerated. The proper remuneration of that portion I pocket for myself, and that is how my dividends arise.' Moreover the possibility for the worker to become his own capitalist and to get the full remuneration of his labour was barred by the land system and by machinery. Therefore under various headings, such as nationalisation of the land and capital, co-operation and Socialism, the workers were demanding one thing – namely that they should inherit the fruits of their work. On the other hand it would be extremely difficult for a member of the moneyed class to extricate himself from the awkward fact that he was amassing surplus value. Probably he should adopt a very simple mode of living in order to free himself from the weight of money. He could employ the superfluous wealth thus obtained so as to start 'productive Co-operation, either on a small scale or by the community at large' or to help dissemination of ideas on the subject. This was, indeed, nothing more than a version of Owenism, and such was in fact Carpenter's 'Socialism' as a social and economic application of his belief in spiritual democracy.

It is not known when he obtained a copy of Marx's *Capital*, at this time only available in German and French, but one of the marginal notes in his copy of the French edition read: 'labour value implies *man* himself & is therefore not analysable'. Later he went so far as to reject the 'science' of 'scientific' Socialism, whether that of 'abstract human labour' or of 'final utility'. Nevertheless, his study of the Marxist analysis of surplus value gave Carpenter a plan for social reconstruction and drew him closer to the nascent Socialist movement.

Hyndman's Democratic Federation had transformed itself from a Radical semi-Socialist body into a revolutionary organisation by

identifying itself with the cause of the Irish Land League, and it had been strengthened by the accession of working-class membership by this time. Later in 1883 Carpenter visited their committee meeting which was held in the basement of a building facing the House of Parliament. There he saw Hyndman occupying the chair, and with him William Morris, John Burns, H. H. Champion, J. L. Joynes, Herbert Burrows and others, 'a group of conspirators', sitting around the table. He maintained friendly relations with this body which in the following year adopted the name of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), but he later said, he 'did not actually join' it.⁷ It is true that the sectarian conflict that soon shook the SDF was an abomination to him, and as far as possible he avoided political action that inevitably involved such conflict. In this respect as in his attitude towards co-operation, he was a true disciple of Robert Owen. As Owen had tolerated Feargus O'Connor, the leader of the Chartist movement, with mixed feelings of envy and disapproval, so Carpenter from a distance pitied as well as sympathised with Hyndman's troubles as the would-be chairman of a Committee of Public Safety in an imminent political revolution that never came.

At a special meeting of the Democratic Federation held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on 11 January 1884, Hyndman as chairman announced that a journal called *Justice* would be started on the 19th 'owing chiefly to the liberality of a member of the Federation (Mr. Edward Carpenter)'.⁸ Thus he was claimed for once as a member of the Federation. The money for *Justice* was handed in later, for his account book shows that he gave £300 in three instalments to William Morris, treasurer of the organisation.⁹

Already at the meeting of 11 January, a fundamental difference of opinion within the Federation became apparent. The old Chartist James Murray moved a resolution in favour of universal suffrage and other political reforms as a means of obtaining a reduction of hours of labour and socialisation of the means of production, but anti-parliamentary spokesmen insisted that all means were justifiable to 'better the condition of the wage-slave'. Dr Aveling, for his part, maintained that 'scientific socialism' was the basis of their work, and favoured 'political movements' including the demand for payment of members.¹⁰

In the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion and distrust among the

leaders of the Federation, Carpenter sought to emphasise 'the importance of personal actions and ideals' 'by way of balance', because many schemes, reformist or revolutionary, had been proposed mainly for the institutional regeneration of society. He had already expatiated on the theme of alienation with special reference to the wealthy. They should be pitied, rather than railed against, for they lived in a prison which they called a 'desirable mansion' and in which they were trained 'ostensibly in the fear of God, but really in the fear of Money'.¹¹ He attacked the idle rich and their ideal, 'England's Ideal', which was 'to live dependent on others, consuming much and creating next to nothing. . . to be a kind of human sink into which much flows but out of which nothing ever comes – except an occasional putrid whiff of Charity and Patronage'. The man who would act upon this 'Ideal' would have to renounce 'the human relation to the mass of mankind'. He might feel a sentimental sympathy for his 'poorer brethren', but

he lives in a house into which it would be simply an insult to ask one of them; he wears clothes in which it is impossible for him to do any work of ordinary usefulness. If he sees an old woman borne down by her burden in the street, he can run to the charity organisation perhaps and get an officer to inquire into her case – but he cannot go straight up to her like a *man*, and take it from her onto his own shoulders; for he is a *gentleman*, and might soil his clothes! . . . his dress is a barrier to all human relation with simple people.¹²

In dealing with the new ideal of 'social brotherhood' and 'honesty' or 'the honest human relation', he again praised the virtue of simplicity and cited Henry Thoreau as its exponent. Yet he was not fully convinced of Thoreau's experiment which was restricted to the mere necessities of life. 'Thoreau preferred leisure to ornaments; other people may prefer ornaments to leisure', wrote Carpenter: 'There is of course no prejudice – all characters, temperaments, and idiosyncrasies are welcome and thrice welcome. The only condition is that you must not expect to have the ornaments and the idleness both.'¹³ Carpenter, for his part, congratulated himself in his memoirs that he had not been snatched away by Thoreau and stranded too far from the currents of ordinary life.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Thoreau as much as Whitman lured him sufficiently

for him to pay another visit to America in the early summer of 1884. He crossed the Atlantic as a steerage passenger, one of seven or eight hundred other such travellers, on an Inman liner, the *City of Berlin*, and he seems to have thoroughly enjoyed it.¹⁵

Here in this hollow cup a thousand souls floating on the unmeasured deep –

A little dust of humanity gathered at random on the shores of one continent, to be tossed at random to the winds of another.

The young clerk with wife and babe, from London, going out to try his fortune at farming in Manitoba:

The great big-bone steerage steward, so kindly to the children and sensible – native of Rome, proud of his Latin origin, member of the Carbonari and imprisoned by Austrians in his time – now serving out treacle and bread and butter to emigrants[.]¹⁶

On 17 June he was in Camden, but he found Whitman less helpful than before. The old man's 'self-centredness' had increased. *Leaves of Grass* was a constant topic, but apparently *Towards Democracy* was never discussed. He was all the more disappointed as he now discovered in his old master an apologist of private enterprise, a protagonist of free trade and free emigration, and generally a sceptic of reform.

He went north, visited the Walden pond, bathed in it, and laid a stone on Thoreau's cairn. He then proceeded to Canada, embarked on the *Parisian* at Quebec and returned home in August. 'Am now on my way back – as a steerage passenger', he wrote to Oates, lying in a berth near the portholes: '– couldn't stand the saloon people! The steeragers are really very nice, orderly & goodnatured – we have quite jolly times – only they are too corroded but that is not their fault.'¹⁷

Upon his return from America he found the SDF torn and sundered by internal dissensions. *Justice* under Hyndman's editorship was regarded by his critics as an instrument of his 'arbitrary' rule. Carpenter seems to have sided, at least for a while, with the critics who, unlike Hyndman, were not bound by 'Constitutionalism'. But he avoided sectarian struggles, and again from some distance – from the fields at Millthorpe – he watched events that culminated in an open split at the end of that year.

The last skirmish of this internecine struggle was waged in Scotland, where Andreas Scheu, the Austrian exile and Morris's friend, had set up the Scottish Land and Labour League in Edinburgh, and in the rivalry between this body and the SDF in Glasgow Scheu challenged the leadership of Hyndman whom he regarded as a 'chauvinist'. In October Carpenter sent £50 to Scheu, apparently to support his cause. About the same time Morris wrote to Scheu: 'Carpenter seems a very trusty person: he tells me he is going to Edinburgh: I shall get into regular communication with him.'¹⁸ Morris, however, does not seem to have made much progress at the time in securing his support, though he found him 'very sympathetic and sensible' when he paid a visit to Millthorpe:

I listened with longing heart to his account of his patch of ground, seven acres: he says that he and his fellow can almost live on it: they grow their own wheat, and send flowers and fruit to Chesterfield and Sheffield markets: all that sounds very agreeable to me. It seems to me that the real way to enjoy life is to accept all its necessary ordinary details and turn them into pleasure by taking interest in them.

All this seemed to Morris to be 'a refuge from our mean squabbles and corrupt society'.¹⁹

The 'mean squabbles' in the SDF had to be wound up. At an executive meeting held on 27 December, a motion of confidence in Scheu and no confidence in Hyndman was finally adopted by 10 to 8. The majority faction, however, had no hope of carrying the rank-and-file with their argument. After 'due consultation with Engels' as Eleanor Marx said, they decided to withdraw, and at once a new organisation, the Socialist League, was set up on 30 December. Morris was busy with his attempts to provide money for a new organ and thought of Carpenter as a possible ally and benefactor: 'I haven't heard from Carpenter again. I hope 'tis all right with him still.' A few days later Morris wrote again: 'I am not quite sure of Carpenter yet, but expect to see him in a day or two.'²⁰ In fact, Carpenter was in London in January, saw both Morris and Hyndman, and had long talks with them. In a letter to Robert Sharland, a Bristol Socialist, written shortly after these talks, Carpenter said:

With great admiration and friendship for Morris I feel almost certain that he has had his mind poisoned against Hyndman and the others by

certain schemers, and he has led out into the wilderness a body of men who undoubtedly have done very little in the cause, and several of whom are ambitious and designing. If he can weld them together and get good work out of them – well and good; but it seems to me probable that he will have a great deal of trouble in doing that. There is a certain colour in the charges against Hyndman. He is hasty, feverish and rather sharp-tongued at times, but I have come to the conclusion that he is at bottom genuine and faithful to the cause. He has made great sacrifices in it. . . . There must not be any break-up of the Federation. The men who have worked so hard in it all along still stick together, and are ready to continue working. *Justice* must be kept going. . . . We regret the departure of Morris from the Federation, but I do not myself think that we have lost much in the others.²¹

Prominent among the ‘certain schemers’ mentioned here was Edward Aveling who had a personal grudge against Hyndman, for the latter had questioned his qualification as an executive member because of alleged irregularities in money matters.

Carpenter at once sent more money to *Justice* which was hard hit by the split. He was financially responsible for the publication in April of an appeal for the support of the paper issued with the signatures of ninety-nine working-men. He even wrote in *Justice* on ‘the Cause of Poverty’ in a trenchant Hyndmanesque style. Referring to the current report of the North Eastern Railway Company, he declared:

Roughly one million sterling goes to the workers who carry on the line, and one million and a half to the idlers, who claim interest on their capital – or in other words, out of every ten hours that the signalman, engine-driver, or other servant or official works, he gives six hours for the benefit of the share- and bond-holder, and only has four for himself. And this is how the well-to-do classes live in England to-day; well-to-do because they suck the life-blood of the poor and needy. Shylock was not such a sinner after all, we think now-a-days.²²

He was, however, much less Marxist or Hyndmanite in his view of the evolution of society. His basic argument was Lamarckian: like plants, society would grow by throwing off its husks in its search for the secret of its existence. ‘The Conservative may be wrong, but the Liberal is just as wrong who considers his reform as ultimate.’ Social progress would take the form of a continual fight against law or the

tendency of institutions to stereotype themselves. The husk to be thrown off in a modern society was the capitalist class with its laws and institutions, and the change would begin with a new growth of moral sense within the individual, 'a new sentiment of humanity'. Socialism might become a science, but 'only secondarily'. In short, the new ideal of dignity of man and labour was something that would transcend and surpass even Socialist laws and institutions. With this view of 'Exfoliation', Carpenter emerged essentially as an evolutionary Anarchist thinker.²³ Hence he eschewed all sectarian sentiments and associations. He distrusted all the tendencies to regard particular reforms as infallible and final, and he would help all the causes that appeared to him to expedite the progress of the new ideal.

Carpenter soon renewed his friendly relations with Morris and sent him a copy of *Walden*. Morris for his part took some interest in the 'Craig Farm' started by Harold Cox, a Cambridge graduate, who, as a University Extension lecturer, had come under Carpenter's spell. Cox stayed at Millthorpe while his friend was away in America; and backed with substantial financial help that he received from Carpenter, he took a farm at Tilford in Surrey to which he brought a working-class family, and he sought to turn it into a farm colony. Morris appreciated Cox's farm as he had previously been impressed by Carpenter's Millthorpe. As for *Walden* he found it very interesting, but he felt that the author looked upon human life as a spectator. 'That's a convenient & pleasant position to take up', he wrote to Carpenter:

I don't object, meantime, to a one-sided way of looking at matters so long as we understand that it *is* one sided. And I know from experience what a comfortable life one might lead if one could be careful not to concern oneself with *persons* but with *things*; or persons in the light of things. But nature won't allow it, it seems, and we must make the best of it, and (when we can) sing under the burden instead of groaning under it.²⁴

The spirit of this letter quite accorded with Carpenter's own sentiments; moreover, it is possible that Morris's critical appraisal of Thoreau helped him to move further away from the 'comfortable life' as a spectator. He now joined the Socialist League.²⁵

There was a certain *rapprochement* between the SDF and the League in the course of a campaign for free speech. Carpenter thus kept friendly contacts with the two Socialist organisations and helped them financially. With a donation of £5 he also assisted Robert Sharland in founding an SDF library at Bristol,²⁶ and as a result the young James Ramsay MacDonald, the future Labour Prime Minister, was appointed librarian there.

Amity and accord, however, did not last long. The SDF in particular suffered disgrace as a result of the 'Tory gold' scandal at the general election of 1885.²⁷ It was not surprising that Carpenter was drawn increasingly to the Socialist League and came to regard William Morris as a most vital representative of the new society.

He was also attracted to the Fellowship of the New Life, the parent body of the Fabian Society. It was some of the Fabians, especially some spiritual Fabians, who really appreciated *Towards Democracy*. When its second, enlarged edition came out in 1885, Edward Pease, the future secretary of the Fabian Society, came to rescue him from the general obloquy with which the book was received at the time. 'No sane person expects', wrote Pease, 'that the millennium will be inaugurated in the House of Commons, or that the chosen of the Caucuses will discover the secret of universal happiness.' Carpenter loved democracy not as a system of government but 'for its destruction of sham and convention, for its promise of justice and happiness to come'. Moreover, his was 'poetry for grown-up people, a very rare, and very precious commodity in this, and perhaps in any age'.²⁸

Another admirer of *Towards Democracy* was Havelock Ellis, a medical student at the time, who was supplementing his meagre sources of income with journalistic work for an advanced group in London. He had been under the influence of the writings of James Hinton, the 'Wizard' as he was called, who had himself trained as a doctor and ended up as the self-styled 'saviour of women'. Ellis was one of the founding members of the Fellowship, and even after the secession of the politically-minded Fabians including Pease himself, remained with the original body, which in his own words was making efforts to 'promote the general social renovation of the world on the broadest and highest lines, seeking inspiration in its Goethean motto: "Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen resolut zu leben"'.²⁹

At one of the early meetings of the Fellowship, someone thrust into Ellis's hand a copy of *Towards Democracy*, which he returned after glancing at a few pages, with the remark: 'Whitman and water'. Shortly afterwards he bought a second-hand copy for himself in Booksellers' Row in the Strand. This time he was convinced that the author was 'a person of altogether different temperament from Whitman' and had written 'a genuine original book full of inspiring and beautiful and consoling things, a book, indeed, that before long was to become for some people a kind of Bible'.³⁰ 'May I thank you for the great delight & help which I have received from "*Towards Democracy*"?' wrote Ellis to Carpenter: 'It is a source of strength to know that even one man is fighting so well on the right side.'³¹

It was perhaps at a meeting of the Fellowship held about this time that Ellis first met Carpenter who, according to Ellis, was 'naturally more in sympathy with its ideals than with those of the more political Fabians'.³² In October 1885 he again wrote to Carpenter, expressing his hopes that the new edition of *Towards Democracy* should more generally be accepted as 'one of the forces of life in literature today'. As for *Modern Science*, Carpenter's new pamphlet, which the author described as 'a direct attack on the validity of scientific "laws" and methods generally',³³ Ellis laconically remarked that 'science is quite open to the attack but most people are so lamentably ignorant that I am rather inclined to defend the cause of knowledge with all its imperfections'.³⁴

Ellis had lent his copy of *Towards Democracy* to several friends, and Olive Schreiner, the authoress of *The Story of an African Farm*, whose acquaintance Ellis had made shortly before, was writing him in May 1884: 'I have been reading that little book you lent me all the afternoon. I like it, and I like it more the more I read it, and when I re-read a page or two I like it better than at first. It is true, and it expresses what is in our hearts, ours of to-day.'³⁵ In another letter that followed, she said: 'What a splendid fellow Carpenter must be. I have just been reading his article ['England's Ideal'] in *To-day*. It expresses what I feel so exactly that I seem to feel as if I had written it myself. What kind of a man is he?'³⁶ Olive's friendship with Ellis soon deepened into intimacy, but she always reserved at least part of her affection for Carpenter.

The advanced and cultured society of London Socialists and

literati gave Carpenter a welcome change from the monotony of the country life in the North. He seems to have found the Fellowship and its ethical overtone most congenial to him, and actually joined it about this time. By and large he remained disillusioned with national Socialist politics. He looked around and saw that he was surrounded by several intimate friends and some ardent disciples in the Sheffield area, where he would be justified in starting a local Socialist body to facilitate the advent of the new society.

SIX

SHEFFIELD WORKERS
AND MILLTHORPIANS

THE notorious 'outrages' and violence against non-union men that characterised Sheffield artisans in the sixties does not alter the fact that Liberalism had a strong working-class basis in the city. Many working men possessed a franchise that was much older than the Second Reform Act of 1867. They apparently enjoyed a rise in real income in the period of falling prices in the 'Great Depression'. Yet in the third quarter of the century, competition from abroad began to threaten their life of security and comfort. 'The iron and steel trades, long ailing, are getting worse; the manufacturer of silver and silver-plated goods is little better; and in the staple cutlery business Sheffield is finding it hard to hold her own', read a report published in *Justice* in 1884.¹

The Sheffield Working Men's Radical Association, an organisation allied to the SDF, had a membership of about 200 shortly after its formation in 1884.² Its treasurer, John Furniss, was a quarryman by trade and former Methodist preacher. 'Keen and wiry both in body and mind', according to Carpenter, he was the very first man who preached Socialism in the streets of Sheffield,³ and Carpenter was always willing to back him up. The Association, however, split when its Radical majority supported Samuel Plimsoll, 'the Seamen's friend', at the General Election of 1885. The remainder, probably a handful of working-men, led by John Furniss rallied around Mervyn Lanark Hawkes, an Independent candidate, who was attacking 'the so-called working-class leaders here [who] were mere emissaries of the Caucus and of the capitalists'. 'We are told the

Liberals are friends of the people', declared Furniss: 'I don't want friends of the people – I want the people. . . Working men managed to create wealth, and can therefore manage Parliamentary affairs.' On the platform at this election meeting sat Edward Carpenter and several members of the Association who were soon to launch a fresh Socialist campaign in Sheffield.⁴

Thus Carpenter was taking root even politically among the Sheffield workers, but the root was primarily agricultural. Indeed, it was his rustic life and its designed simplicity that sustained and conditioned not only his hopes but his work for Socialism.

'The strange oestrum of hard manual work', as he put it, was somewhat alleviated or even purified by the gospel of 'Simplification of Life' which he practised at Millthorpe. The quality of bread baked from his flour was superior to the 'bread of commerce'. Throughout he adopted a frugal diet. With only one dish each meal, the housewife's work was reduced to a minimum, an achievement not to be expected from any labour-saving appliances. 'Leather coffins' were to be replaced by airy sandals.⁵ He worked for hours in the open field, went into Chesterfield for manure, or visited the pits for coal, or started off to market in Sheffield at six in the morning with vegetables and fruits in the little cart with 'Edw. Carpenter Market Gardener Millthorpe' painted on it. For the first three or four years he carried on the management of his farm himself and once thought of putting it on 'a distinct co-operative footing',⁶ but this was soon given up. Nevertheless, his arcadia began to attract visitors from the more refined and sophisticated world outside.

Thus in December 1885 there came Charles Robert Ashbee, then an undergraduate of King's College, Cambridge, who was later to found the Guild and School of Handicraft, and his friend 'Goldie', Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, then a University Extension lecturer. They were fascinated by their host who, Ashbee thought, came 'nearer to one's ideal of *The Man* than anyone I have ever met. He seeks to eliminate the superfluous', Ashbee went on:

his cottage is simply built and furnished: – there is the house-place or kitchen in which we sat & had our meals, there is a little parlour not yet furnished & used as a granary & apple-room; above are the bed rooms. The inmates of the cottage are Carpenter and his friend Albert Furnief [*sic*] – a labourer with his wife and daughter – quiet simple folk with a

sort of natural dignity & serenity in their comportment possibly reflected from Carpenter himself.

Walking through the sunny woods, barren of leaves, Carpenter told his young visitors of his life, 'of his labourer friends, of the depressed state of the people – their melancholy & their sorrow'.⁷

In London there was a swift development of events in Socialist politics. A series of unemployed demonstrations culminated in the West-End riot of 8 February 1886. On that day a procession led by John Burns from Trafalgar Square went out of control, and demonstrators resorted to unlawful acts of attacking property on the way. Hyndman was rehabilitated as the leader of a coming revolution, while Morris with wounded pride wrote in *Commonweal*: 'we have been overtaken unprepared by a revolutionary incident'. 'The Gospel of Discontent is in a fair way towards forcing itself on the whole of the workers', Morris continued:

How can that discontent be used so as to bring about the New Birth of Society? . . . It is too much to hope that the *whole* working-class can be educated in the aims of Socialism in due time, before other surprises take place. But we *must* hope that a strong party can be so educated. Educated in economics, in organisation, and in administration.⁸

It appears that Carpenter fully shared this view and was quite prepared to join in this work of education in Sheffield. In fact, he interpreted in his own amicable way what Morris said more forcibly in the above article, for, he thought, Morris had expressed there a hope that the branches of the Socialist League would grow and spread, and 'before long "reach hands" to each other and form a network over the land – would constitute in fact "the new society" within the framework of the old, and destined ere long to replace the old'.⁹ It may be that Carpenter mistook for Morris's view a proposal made by Joseph Lane at a League meeting to make branches less dependent upon the central body as a step towards 'free federated Communes'. At any rate, Morris declared himself against any attempt to form separate societies, whether local or central. 'Habitual and organised intercourse is necessary to the education I have been speaking of. . . I appeal, therefore, to all who agree with us, individuals, local bodies, or central ones, to give up the mere name of

independence in order to attain its reality, and to join our League."¹⁰

Morris came to Sheffield and spoke in the Secularist Hall of Science on 28 February. On the following day he attended a private meeting of about thirty sympathisers including Socialists from the defunct Radical Association, which had been called to discuss the possibility of a definite Socialist organisation in the city. 'Of course I went as an advocate of the League', wrote Morris:

I found much interest in the subject amongst the friends, also some doubts and hanging back from that step of association, a step undoubtedly harder to take in a provincial town where people are so much more known and as it were ticketed than in London. The doubts had reference, some to the religious question, but mostly I think they turned on our repudiation of a Parliamentary method, the reasons for which I did my best to explain.¹¹

In spite of his pleas and apologies it was decided to set up a Socialist body separate from the Socialist League.

Carpenter prepared a programme for 'the Sheffield Socialists'. It began with an analysis of 'the landlord and capitalist system, by which one man is enabled to live on the labour of another'. Their main object was stated to be the abolition of the present class society and the attainment of 'a regenerate society in which every one who can shall work and receive the due reward of his work'. For this purpose they would strive for the abolition of monopoly both in land and capital. The land would belong to 'the People' to be let out to genuine occupants. Large industries should gradually be taken over 'into the hands of the People' - 'railways, for example, under national management: gas, water-works, tramways, &c., into municipal hands - wages being paid on a more equitable basis than now, and profits (which would be less in consequence) going to general purposes instead of to idle shareholders'. As an immediate programme to achieve these 'objects' it was further proposed that 'a cumulative income tax' was to be introduced, and 'Labour Representation must be pushed forward in all forms - Parliamentary, Town Councils, Boards of Guardians, School Boards, &c.' Indeed, it was not the conquest of political or parliamentary power by the vanguard of the working classes which was Hyndman's ambition nor mere agitation and education as Morris would have favoured but 'Labour Representation' that the Sheffield workers fell back upon.

Educational work was stressed, and weekly evening meetings were to be held at the Wentworth Cafe in Holly Street which had been the regular meeting place of the Working Men's Radical Association. Forty-six names including those of Carpenter, John Furniss and Jonathan Taylor, a member of the Sheffield School Board and previously of the Executive Committee of Hyndman's body, were appended and their voluntary subscriptions were entered in a document attached to the draft copy of the programme.¹² Thus the Society of Sheffield Socialists came into existence in March 1886; they asserted independence from the squabbling London leaders and engaged in missionary work among the local population.

Carpenter invited Ashbee to come to Sheffield to see some of the Socialists there. He met his friend at the station when the latter arrived in the town on 30 March, and took him to see some of the cutlery houses. 'I'd rather be a coal miner than a maker of Sheffield blades', Ashbee wrote in his diary: 'Coming fresh from one's political economy books, especially those who with Fawcett sing of the golden age that has dawned, one little realizes what the life of these factory hands – men, women & children really is. Grimy, grinding, deadly monotony.'

That evening Carpenter took the chair at a meeting at which a lecture was given by John Sketchley of Birmingham, an old Chartist and one of the pioneer Socialists. It was a dull lecture: Sketchley 'poured forth statistics in answer & in argument'. There the programme of the Sheffield Socialists was distributed, and Ashbee received a copy. Next morning Carpenter took him over to John Brown's Works, one of the largest steel mills in Sheffield. 'Twas very wonderful', wrote Ashbee: 'A whole epic is in one of these factories, a world of sorrow, of beauty, of ugliness, of power, of pathos, of heroism. And as for mere external loveliness & wonder! Why we sat for 20 minutes, watching in astonishment.'

On the following day he was at Millthorpe, digging and replanting raspberries with Carpenter, and 'chatting with him the while on Socialism, on Sir Henry Maine & Democracy, and on Wagner and all the most delightful subjects imaginable'. Here he came to know several labourers, all Carpenter's friends, 'finding out that they are human beings with souls inside them'.

Carpenter in his turn snatched a holiday and paid a visit to Cambridge in July. He spent a few days there as a guest of Ashbee who had been back from his 'East Londonising' at Toynbee Hall. After supper on the day Carpenter arrived, 'we had a delightful walk through the green cornfields in the afterglow', wrote Ashbee: 'He unfolded to me a wonderful idea of his, of a new freemasonry, a comradeship in the life of men which might be based on our little Cambridge circle of friendships. Are we to be the nucleus out of which the new Society is to be organised?' Carpenter's exalted idea of friendship or comradeship was now directly linked with his visions of a new society and Socialism. 'To have Edward up here is wonderful', Ashbee's diary went on: 'It is as if we had a hero among us. We are knit together by a Presence. I don't understand, I only feel the influence. . . Modesty, dignity, infinite reserve, a power of seeing through, & a great intolerance of shams. We were all together in Jim Headlam's room this evening & he unfolded to us some of James Hinton's ideas', apparently on sexual freedom. Two days later 'Goldie' Dickinson joined the group, '& Cambridge is almost complete again', wrote Ashbee: 'Tonight we were in his room, Carpenter, Fry, Goldy & myself – after we had come back from Beethoven and Schubert at the Brauholtzes – talking transcendentalism and rr'.¹³

After a week's pleasant sojourn, Carpenter returned to his 'lair', from which he wrote to Ashbee:

How to reconcile *that* freedom & culture of life [at Cambridge] with self-supporting labour – that is the question that vexed me. Here in the agricultural parts (& in Sheffield) we have practicality – deadly dull, worn out & grimy – at Cambridge you have lawn tennis & literature – and 4 men to support each of you! What is to be done?¹⁴

He now envisaged two types of friendships, a freemasonry among the Cambridge elite who admired his mode of life and an even freer association of Socialist comrades among the Sheffield workers, and while he placed himself among the latter, he would endeavour to weld these two apparently incongruous elements together, by throwing all the class and cultural barriers into the melting pot of Democracy.

Ashbee and 'Goldie' visited Millthorpe again in September. There

was an attraction – a pair of sandals sent by Harold Cox who was then in India as a teacher of mathematics. They and Carpenter were invited to the Moorhay Community about four miles from Millthorpe, where Ashbee saw ‘a Community of Early Christians pure & simple’. There was ‘no sectarianism, no selfishness (at least as far as one can see) & no private property except in wives’. Their host was John Furniss, whose work for Sheffield Socialism we have already mentioned. For this community he recruited some twenty enthusiasts, rented 180 acres of land, and by then had opened up three-quarters of it, though some still worked at their other occupations when they were in Sheffield. Now Carpenter helped the men load the hay before the evening mists set in. It all seemed to promise the dawn of a new society.¹⁵

In Sheffield Carpenter and his working-men friends had started open-air meetings at the corner of Fargate and Surrey Street. There on 16 August, John Furniss, Carpenter and several others expounded the principles of Socialism to a sizable audience. Furniss was as fiery a champion as ever of class struggle. Carpenter attacked ‘the system of interest’, declaring that ‘the key to Socialism was the abolition of rent and interest, going to a class as they do now’. Robert F. Muirhead, a graduate of St Catharine’s College, Cambridge, and a member of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League, whom Carpenter had met when he visited Glasgow earlier in the year, was there, and gave an account of the movement in Scotland.¹⁶ They were all ‘affectionately watched by six policemen’, but nothing serious happened, and their open-air meetings went on unmolested.¹⁷ Among the local speakers there was Raymond Unwin of Chesterfield, ‘a young man of cultured antecedents, of first-rate ability and good sense’ according to Carpenter, and later well-known as an architect and also as a promoter of Garden Cities, who gave an interesting lecture on ‘Communism’ with a special emphasis on the Russian *Mir*.¹⁸ In October Carpenter spoke on ‘Nationalisation of the Railways’, and a tea and entertainment was held at the Wentworth Cafe.¹⁹ Thus began a serious and strenuous propaganda for Socialism in Sheffield.

Carpenter’s *England Arise: a Socialist Marching Song*, which was published later in the year, was indeed a monumental work to record

the great hope of the new society that had arisen with the spread of Socialist propaganda in Sheffield and elsewhere. It has been described as 'his finest gift to the movement'. He also composed the tune 'during the course of a golden sunrise' one day.²⁰

England Arise! the long, long night is over,
 Faint in the East I see the dawn appear;
 Out of your evil dream of toil and sorrow,
 Arise! O England, for the day is here;
 From your fields and hills,
 Hark! the answer swells,
 Arise! O England, for the day is here.

. . .

Forth, then, ye heroes, patriots and lovers!
 Comrades of danger, poverty and scorn!
 Mighty in faith of Freedom your great Mother!
 Giants refreshed in Joy's new-rising morn!
 Come and swell the song,
 Silent now so long:
 England is risen! – and the day is here.

In October he sold by auction the old house at Brighton, and was busy disposing of furniture. In a letter he wrote from there to Oates, he dropped a hint that suggested the beginning of a new comradeship for him. 'My friend, George, has turned out too good almost to be true – will tell you about him some time.'²¹ 'George' was George E. Hukin, about twenty-six years old at the time, employed in the razor trade, and one of the founding members of the Sheffield Socialist Society. With his 'Dutch-featured face and Dutch build' he was affectionately remembered as 'always from the beginning a special ally of mine', though he was not a good speaker, nor prominent in public.²²

The poor Hukin, however, felt quite uneasy and even embarrassed when he was treated in a kindly and comradely fashion by Carpenter: 'Dear Edward, . . . I would rather withdraw from, than approach any nearer to you. I feel so mean and little beside you, altogether unworthy of your friendship. . . Sorry I cannot come nearer to you'.²³ Initial difficulties were soon overcome, and in October Hukin sent him a letter of tender affection. Only his work for Sheffield Socialists prevented his coming to Brighton to join him. He had been search-

ing, on behalf of Carpenter, for appropriate premises for a coffee house where Socialists could get together. He also persuaded the Socialist Society to issue a leaflet by Carpenter, *A Letter to the Employees of the Midland & Other Railway Companies*, a plea for railway nationalisation based on his lecture.

Later in that year Carpenter returned to Millthorpe, where he wrote to Oates:

George is as good as ever and we are great chums – are going to London together for a week from 30th Dec. (I have some lecturing to do & he wants a holiday). . . He does me good – being very easy going & comic, yet deep feeling underneath – and I trust I help him too. He generally stays the night with me on Saturdays – either at Millthorpe or at my quarters in Sheffield: we have some very good fellows among our Socialist Society – I must say *that* type is far preferable to the so-called Radicals. As a rule I hate *them* – cantankerous argumentative animals – but the Socialists are generally, as far as I have seen them, warm-hearted & of a sympathetic cast.²⁴

Early in the following year the Sheffield Socialists opened the Commonwealth Cafe in a house in Scotland Street, one of the poorer districts in the town. The large room above was used for meetings and lectures, and the house itself for a joint residence for those who were directly involved in the work of the Society. Carpenter paid the expenses for furnishing and decorating the cafe. He took the chair at the first meeting held there, which was addressed by John Furniss, Tom Maguire of Leeds, and J. L. Mahon of the Socialist League. Shortly afterwards Hukin reported to Carpenter who was then in Scotland:

We had a good meeting on Monday, but I did not care much for the lecture. It was much too dry for me. Garbutt's remedy was to transform society into one huge joint-stock company compensating all owners of land & capital. There was a rather good discussion at the close between Furniss & Garbutt, Furniss objecting to any compensation whatever.²⁵

Carpenter felt the strain of hard work again, but he felt he was saved by Hukin and his affectionate friendship. These two would go out for a few days' walking tour among the Derbyshire hills. 'His love is so disinterested & so tender – I hardly dare think it true'.²⁶ Yet a disappointment awaited him even at this most sacred spot of

his whole emotional existence. George Hukin was really heterosexual or perhaps bisexual, and was anxious to marry his girl-friend Fannie. Something serious or awkward must have happened when Hukin wrote to him from Scotland Street: 'I think both Fannie and I felt rather down when you left.'²⁷ In his next letter dated 21 May he disclosed his intention to marry.

Carpenter was now in Italy, staying at Acqui with Charles Oates – away from grimy Sheffield, away from Hukin and Fannie. He also expected to meet Olive Schreiner who was somewhere on the continent. Olive had discovered that Havelock Ellis with whom she was in love was not fitted to play the part in their relationship which 'her elementary primitive nature craved'.²⁸ She was then suffering from psychosomatic ailments, and in her trouble she found *Towards Democracy*, especially the poems there entitled 'Have Faith', both helpful and comforting:

Do not hurry: have faith.

...

Covet not overmuch. Let the strong desires come and go;
refuse them not, disown them not; but think not that in them
lurks finally the thing you want.

Presently they will fade away and into the intolerable light
will dissolve like gossamere before the sun.²⁹

She left England in December 1886 and the following month she was writing from a hotel by the lake of Geneva to her other dear friend Carpenter:

The question of sex is so very *complex*, & you cannot treat it adequately at all unless you show its complexity. Complex as our labour problem is & difficult to embody in any form of art, I feel it would be far more simple than this. . . Yes Ellis has a strange reserved spirit. The tragedy of his life is the outer man gives no expression to the wonderful beautiful soul in him, which now & then flashes out on you when you come near him.³⁰

In April she wrote to him from Alassio about his books, about ideas for the simplification of life, and about *Sex and Socialism*, a pamphlet by Karl Pearson to whom she felt 'a spiritual love'.³¹ 'I wish I was a man that I might be friends with all of you, but you know my

sex must always divide', she wrote in yet another letter to Carpenter.³²

At Acqui Carpenter parted from Oates, took the night train across the Alps, and met Olive in Paris. The day before Carpenter was due to arrive, she had written to Ellis: 'I feel as if seeing Carpenter would just save me. He has been suffering from great and terrible disappointment in human nature where he had trusted, but he is going back to the human he loves all right now. He has been great help and strength to me'.³³ Indeed, Carpenter was glad to have her company, and she his, for both had felt helpless and hopeless in their craving for love. 'Poor thing, she is in a very restless state, & keeps threatening to go off to the Cape', he wrote to Oates: 'We went together to the Parisian "Salon" by way of a distraction and saw any number of pictures of naked women in the most obscenely distorted attitudes', an escapade which he apparently did not enjoy very much.³⁴

In the early morning of 8 June, Olive and Carpenter arrived in London by way of Dover. 'Everybody as you say seems in trouble', he wrote to Hukin from London: 'My sisters here seem only just able to keep their heads up. - I wish we three [Carpenter, Hukin and Fannie] could have 2 or 3 days clear to talk about things.'³⁵ Two days later he was in Sheffield again.

We have no record of Carpenter's life for the rest of June and most of July, but it is certain that something very serious and depressing took place in his relations with Hukin and Fannie. In a letter to Oates, only part of which now remains, he complained of his sleeplessness.³⁶ It was about this time that he took a fancy to another member of the Sheffield Socialists, George Adams, and spent a summer holiday with him at Whitby. Adams, born in the poorest slums of Sheffield as the son of a drunken cobbler, was then employed as an insurance-collector, 'most depressing of occupations' as Carpenter called it.³⁷ A married man, soon to have two children, he was ready to exchange the dismal trade of 'eternally dunning the needy denizens of mean streets for their funeral and coffin monies' for anything Carpenter might offer in the way of managing his affairs. On 17 August he wrote to Carpenter from Sheffield: 'you must not bother about things here else we shall be losing you and that we can ill afford to do...I called at the Commonwealth this morning...George

[Hukin] and his wife seem very comfortable, one could not imagine a better match. Lucy [Mrs Adams] sends her kind love to you, and I am loving friend George.³⁸

Now in the train to Whitby, Carpenter wrote to Oates a note full of melancholy and anxiety:

I am healing & hardening nicely & find I am beginning to think of other people, other possibilities – which is a good sign. Certainly it is better for me to be away from the pair [Hukin and Fannie] for the most part – for tho' they are *both* very affectionate, it causes me most horrible spasms of jealousy to see them. I find that George [Hukin]'s illness *was* owing to seeing me – grief on my account & sorrow at having hurt me. He was so lovely on Thursday morning & kissed me & looked in my eyes so lovingly – it seems awfully hard to have anything come between us. Really these things are. . . *overpossessing* – the fierce & frightful waging for a mate – & the mockery of *women* always thrust in the way. I fear it will be a life-long struggle – with defeat certain – yet one *must* go on.³⁹

Olive Schreiner wished to see Carpenter again, and paid him a visit at Whitby from where she wrote: 'Life, personal life, is a great battle field. Those who enter it must fight. Those who enter it & will not fight get riddled with bullets. . . This as much whether the object is love & sympathy as whether it be health & power. One will never find a man so loved that some other woman does not desire.'⁴⁰ It was brave of Olive to say this, but was Carpenter going to fight?

Nevertheless, it was perhaps Olive, stronger personality of the two, who saved Carpenter. 'I wish I knew all', she wrote him ten days later. 'You must be gentle to her, because it's hard for her too; & she hadn't the large things to fall back on that you have. I didn't know that you & he ever came quite close to each other still; I thought your life was all quite *empty*. I understand now better.'⁴¹ Or it may have been a visit by Ashbee and Roger Fry or that of 'Goldie' to Millthorpe that helped to restore his dignity.⁴² 'I think you might do something some-day with your Guild ideas', he wrote to Ashbee: 'and I believe you have a real love for the rougher types of youth among the "people". . . without which indeed one could do but little.'⁴³

Again, it was probably the strenuous work for Socialism carried on by a handful of Sheffield Socialists including Hukin himself that brought sense to Carpenter's distraught mind. During the summer

they organised open-air meetings without Carpenter. In September they started their winter campaign, and in the following month passed a resolution against the execution of the seven Chicago Anarchists who had been condemned for their alleged connection with the fatal bomb in the Haymarket affair.

Further, the 'Bloody Sunday' of that year roused Carpenter's Socialist conscience, for he was an eye-witness of what appeared to many to be the 'counter-revolutionary violence' of the police. There was a ban on public meetings in Trafalgar Square, but on 13 November Radicals and Socialists determined to defy it. The square was occupied by the police, and processions of demonstrators protesting against coercion in Ireland were brutally broken up by them. The *Pall Mall Gazette* stigmatised the whole incident as 'the Tory Coup d'Etat' and published several accounts of police brutality including one from Carpenter himself:

I was standing with a friend watching the mounted men charge the people right and left, when they turned towards us, who were in front of dense crowd massed on the pavement. 'Clear off, clear off!' I don't know how fast the sturdy Briton is expected to fly, but in our case I suppose it was not fast enough, for in a moment my companion (a peaceful mathematician, by the way, of high university standing) [Robert Muirhead] was collared and shaken in a most violent – I may say brutal manner. I remonstrated, and was struck in the face by the clenched fist of 'law and order'.⁴⁴

John Burns and Cunninghame Graham who made attempts to march into the square were arrested, later brought to court, and each sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment. At the trial, Carpenter gave evidence in favour of the defendants: asked whether he had seen any rioting, he answered: 'Not on the part of the people!'⁴⁵ In the meantime, Carpenter's *England's Ideal*, mostly a collection of his published articles and pamphlets, was creating quite a stir among advanced sections of the educated classes. It was apparently not the time for him to indulge in self-pity and morbid melancholy.

In November Carpenter presented a bed to the Hukins: it was perhaps meant to be a form of olive branch, and it appeared effective. Thanking him for the present, Hukin wrote: 'It's ever so much nicer than the one we had, so much softer, and so wide we might easily lose each other in it, if it wasn't for the way it sinks in the

middle, which somehow throws us together whether or no.' And he added:

I do wish you could sleep with us sometimes Ed, but I don't know whether Fannie would quite like it yet, and I don't feel I could press it on her anyway. Still I often think how nice it would be if we three could only love each other so that we might sleep together sometimes without feeling that there was anything at all wrong in doing so.⁴⁶

Olive Schreiner, for her part, had left for Alassio, and Havelock Ellis, who was then in Blackburn as assistant to a doctor there, wrote to Carpenter about Olive's sensitive nature: 'It is true that she is alone, but that is really the best thing for her; she gets more harm than good from being with people (of course I don't include such harmless individuals as ourselves!)'⁴⁷ In the void of a solitary sojourn, Olive thought of her 'Chips' 'all day' – so she confessed. 'Isn't life a funny thing, & this gnawing hunger at our hearts. Perhaps it is through this hunger that the race grows.'⁴⁸

The void that had been created within Carpenter's own emotional life was now partially filled. He returned to Sheffield in the middle of December, and felt more cheerful than he had expected. 'It is true', he wrote to Oates:

the little pain in the hidden chamber has come back again on seeing *her* [Fannie], but it is curious how almost entirely *physical* it is. Mentally I feel easy-minded & hardly distressed. She seems to draw off a little – or perhaps it is my own reflection in her that I see – but he is very affectionate, as much so as ever. The position is a little difficult for me; but I feel ever so much stronger now – especially in the thought of your sympathy, dear friend, and in the feeling which my visit to London has produced – namely that we are going to form by degrees a body of friends, who will be tied together by the strongest general bond, and also by personal attachments – and that we shall help each other.⁴⁹

What actually transpired in London, or even who the people were whom he met there, is not very clear. Certainly Muirhead was with him at Trafalgar Square, and later helped him to work out a proof of 'Taylor's theorem' in the differential calculus. But this period of Carpenter's life is curiously shrouded in the mists of obscurity. It appears from this letter that in London he revived and extended the proposal he had made at Cambridge in the previous year for a sort of

homosexual freemasonry. It may be that he and Muirhead fell upon the idea of setting up an educational institution or community like the one which was actually opened a few years later under the auspices of the Fellowship of the New Life, of which we shall see more later.

The death penalty for buggery had been repealed in 1861, but it was still and was to remain for nearly a century a crime to be punished by life imprisonment. In response to W. T. Stead's campaign against the White Slave Trade in London, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 authorised the raising of the age of consent of a female prostitute from thirteen to sixteen, and to it was added the Labouchere Amendment which for the first time made all male homosexual acts illegal. Indeed, male homosexuality was now regarded as far more criminal than female prostitution. Carpenter said nothing about the legal aspect of his condition, but as a homosexual lover he was liable not only to obloquy but also to legal prosecution.

Nevertheless, his sexual peculiarity did not attract much attention at the time, owing perhaps to his secluded living and also to general reticence about the subject. It is true that the Cleveland Street affair of 1889 unearthed something of the homosexual underworld of London. But the scandal which led to the imprisonment of post-office boys for homosexual offences had to be more or less hushed up in order not to implicate persons of rank including 'Eddy', the son of the Prince of Wales. It is a curious coincidence that Carpenter had once been invited by Princess (later Queen) Alexandra to become tutor to her sons, Prince Albert Victor ('Eddy', later Duke of Clarence) and Prince George (later King George V). He was then a University Extension lecturer, and apparently was more concerned about education of the working-men than that of the princes of the blood. He visited Windsor Castle in 1875 and respectfully declined the royal offer. He retained autographed photographs of the two princes.

His homosexual life remained a private affair. It was also well protected from curiosity by his fame as a Socialist prophet and dedicated propagandist, and to this aspect of his life we now return.

SEVEN

LABOUR AND CIVILISATION

THE nascent Socialist movement in Britain reached a turning-point as early as 1887-8. In the millenarian hope of a swift social change, it had explored a variety of tactics ranging from revolutionary opportunism to revolutionary militancy, and the common feature of revolutionism itself was a reflection of the growing uneasiness and restlessness among large sections of the working classes, especially the unemployed workers and casual labourers, 'masses of the poor devils of the East End', as Engels once wrote, 'who vegetate in the borderland between working class and Lumpenproletariat'.¹ The threat of militancy, however, was effectively overcome by the forces of law and order, while political agitation appeared futile in the absence of a solid mass following.

Thus within the SDF and the Socialist League, some of the dissidents who became weary of the sectarian or 'purist' tendencies of the two Marxist bodies, began to seek contacts with the masses and were making attempts to bring Socialism into the trade union movement; along with many other allies outside they were now preparing the ground for Labour's real awakening. At the same time Socialism began to grow as local autonomous movements. Already Bristol, Nottingham and Sheffield each had a local Socialist society; branches of the League and even of the SDF acted largely on their own initiative. It was for this great army of labour that Carpenter now compiled a small book of songs to be sung by the workers on their onward march.

Chants of Labour, the title of the book, was suggested by Havelock Ellis who wrote a piece called 'Onwards Brothers'. Designs for the frontispiece and cover were prepared by Walter Crane. The book came out early in 1888; it began with Tom Maguire's 'Hey! for the Day' and ended with Morris's 'All for the Cause', and there were altogether 55 songs by thirty-four poets of various social positions – porter, machine-fitter, barrister, former Eton master, minister, and many others. A favourable review in the *Pall Mall Gazette* emphasised the catholicity of the book and of the type of Socialism it stood for, and concluded by saying that 'to make men Socialists is nothing, but to make Socialism human is a great thing'.² This was exactly what Carpenter wished to do. Indeed, his Socialism was so personal, so closely interwoven with his longing for personal freedom that it had the quality of transcending the boundary of a Socialist dogma and sect and took the form of a fight against various evils of commercial civilisation which were a 'sham' or a 'disease'.

In those early days the Fabian Society retained the character of a Socialist salon open to able protagonists of all progressive ideas, and as such it was more congenial to Carpenter than the two Marxist bodies in the movement. The Fabians listened to Carpenter, though they did not always enjoy what he said. When Carpenter was invited to speak on 'Private Property' for them on New Year's Day 1886, Bernard Shaw remarked in the minutes: 'Awfully dull meeting. . . Two or three meetings like this could finish up any society.'³ Carpenter repeated the same lecture at the Fabian conference held in June at which Socialists, Radicals, and Secularists took part in a debate on the nationalisation of land and capital. When he was invited to deliver another New Year lecture in 1889, he spoke on his long-cherished subject, 'Civilisation: its Cause and Cure'.⁴ He described civilisation as 'disease', social and moral. '*Social disease*, as in body, predatory classes, parasitism, loss of unity; '*Mental disease*, not lunatic asylums but unrest – Ruskin's epigram "Whatever we have – to get more; and wherever we are – to go somewhere else", Moral sense tainted, "Sin" all down Christian centuries', read his lecture notes. Hopes for its cure were to be found in regaining unity in two features: 'Movement towards Communism within Society [and] Nature Movement – Savagery within'. The

subject was central to all his ideas, and it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the success of the daring experiment of his life-style depended upon the reasonableness of his arguments propounded here.

The reception of his 'Civilisation' lecture was, to say the least, hostile. Hyndman, who was there, reminded the lecturer that his paper was 'only an expansion of the Hegelian generalisation of the evolution from unity to disintegration back again to unity on a higher plane', and the benefits of savagery were painted in such glowing colours that listeners uninitiated in Hegelian dialectics would have thought that civilisation had been a decided step backwards. 'Mr. Hyndman in a vigorous speech denied that the savage was less liable to disease than the man of to-day, and asserted that even physically the modern was the robuster and stronger of the two.' Hubert Bland, one of the Fabian essayists, defended civilisation, and criticised the lecturer's tone and method which might mislead 'the ignorant Philistine' as to the aims of Socialism. The sharpest criticism came from Shaw who objected to the Hegelian doctrine given 'in such a doubtful and misleading manner' and declared that such lectures if delivered to outsiders 'could only bring contempt on the Socialist cause'. The chairman, Theodore Wright, also joined in the chorus of adverse criticism. 'Mr. Carpenter expressed, in his reply, his surprise at finding that the Fabian Society was unable to follow an argument, and, evidently nettled at the attack made upon him, defended himself with considerable smartness', read an account of the meeting.⁵ Perhaps his nickname 'Noble Savage' can be traced to this Fabian lecture. Some of his friends, too, were not very enthusiastic. 'I like it *best* about the nakedness', wrote Olive Schreiner when the lecture came out as an article in the *Pioneer*. 'But', she added, 'I like all except where you talk against the intellect. . . Thou darest no more blaspheme against the intellect than another dare against nature. . . What you, who have been overtaught, are striving at, is that wretched choking of the intellect that goes on in schools & colleges, but we, people. . . we cannot feel as you do. *You have been overfed.*'⁶

Apart from Olive's friendly criticism, the Fabian reception made it clear that he was somewhat estranged from the main current of British Socialism which believed in civilisation and its continual progress into Socialism. Indeed, his was a Socialism of the Romantic

who invoked the unity of man and nature as the gospel of general salvation, and he was a Socialist Rousseau fighting a lonely battle against the host of Voltairians in the movement of Socialist Enlightenment. He went his own way, and later in the same year published the lecture together with other supplementary essays in a book under the same title, though he made certain concessions and treated civilisation as something not to be refused outright but to be subjected to 'the real man'.⁷ He was also finding useful allies and ardent disciples who were not satisfied with a cut-and-dried formula of social progress.

He was not defeated by the hostile reception of his Fabian lecture. On the contrary he made a valiant sally into the field of Socialist economics. In fact, he made a rather unexpected appearance, as the arbiter between the two major contestants in 'scientific' Socialism, Hyndman and Shaw. They wielded different weapons in their battle, the one the Marxist concept of 'socially necessary labour' or 'abstract human labour' and the other the Jevonian idea of 'abstract desirability' or 'final utility': but this, said Carpenter, 'is only a return, under modern guise, to the quiddities of the Schoolmen'. Why do these two commodities exchange for each other? – Because of a certain relation between 'abstract human labours' or 'abstract desirabilities' – How do you know that this relation exists between them? – Because they exchange for each other. Hence a quibble or sophism. He conceded that generalisations were often useful.

Sometimes it is convenient to generalise the facts of exchange on a basis of labour, sometimes on a basis of utility (final or other), sometimes on a basis of custom, and so on. These different aspects of the problem vary in relative importance at different times and places, and according to the facts envisaged . . . but it is certain that none . . . is impregnable.

He would welcome the two schools of 'scientific' Socialism only because they would frighten the bourgeoisie 'in the direction in which we wish it to go'.⁸ All the same he largely distrusted the 'science' of social progress.

He now launched a series of new campaigns of his own, directed against the sores of civilisation, the first of which was the landlord system. In March 1889 he published 'A Letter to the Parishioners of Holmesfield' under the title, *Our Parish & Our Duke*. Millthorpe

constituted part of the large parish of Holmesfield with a population of 500, consisting mostly of farmers, farm-labourers, a few miners and small tradesmen, 'a pretty hard-working industrious lot', who were however far from being well-off. They were poor because, he maintained, they paid £2,200 in annual rent to their Duke and other landlords, virtually a tax of £20 a year for each family whose income on an average was under £50. Carpenter investigated the details of the Enclosure Award Book of 1820 and denounced the 'petty robbery' it revealed. Now, he maintained, the parish ought to take hold of its lands. The remedies he suggested were similar to what Thomas Spence had advocated for Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the eighteenth century. With a fund of £2,200 of yearly rent paid to a parish council, the burden of highway and poor rates would be removed, the aged would be looked after, the wages of all parish workers improved, and many other improvements would ensue. In advocating the restoration of land to the people, however, Carpenter was not wholly true to his Anarchist principle, for he believed that the changes he recommended would be achieved by 'the same parliamentary power which took 2570 acres from us in 1820'.

Yet Carpenter was plainly an Anarchist when he defended the cause of criminals: he believed that their acts would register the first instinctive protest against the class society which was 'doomed' or condemned because of its inhumanity. He declared that 'the Outcast of one age is the Hero of another', and went on to argue that 'when Society as to-day rests on private property in land, its counter-ideal is the poacher' who would look upon the landlord as a selfish ruffian. The moral judgement of mankind on usury, theft, magic, suicide, male homosexuality and many other issues varied from age to age, from race to race, and also from class to class. Yet all through history, the law represented the code of the dominant classes. Even here practical considerations took the edge off his argument:

No man can in act or externally be quite true to the ideal – though in spirit he may be . . . The artist does not omit shadows from his canvas; and the wise statesman will not try to abolish the criminal from society – lest haply he be found to have abolished the driving force from his social machine.⁹

The statesman and the criminal were to live together at least for the time being, and the shadow of Anarchism faded away; Carpenter

returned to the serene wisdom of his old friend, the farmer Charles Fox who always saw both sides of the coin.

Across the Atlantic, the aged Whitman was receiving leaflets and articles from Carpenter as they appeared in print. On *Our Parish and Our Duke* he remarked: 'Yes, Edward is a Socialist.'¹⁰ When he read the first part of 'Defence of Criminals', the vain, old man exclaimed: 'It seems to me Edward got the philosophy of that from me.'¹¹

In May 1889 Carpenter started another campaign, a crusade against air pollution or the 'smoke nuisance', as he called it, that made Sheffield 'a by-word . . . throughout the civilised world'. A letter he wrote on the subject to the *Sheffield Independent* attracted wide attention. On a still day as he looked down from the hills, he said, he found the whole city of Sheffield blotted out:

only a vast dense cloud, so thick that I wondered how any human being could support life in it, went up to heaven like the smoke from a great altar. An altar, indeed, it seemed to me, whereon thousands of lives were being yearly sacrificed. Beside me on the hills the sun was shining, the larks were singing; but down there a hundred thousand grown people, let alone children, were struggling for a little sun and air, toiling, moiling, living a life of suffocation, dying (as the sanitary reports only too clearly show) of diseases caused by foul air and want of light – all for what? To make a few people rich! And this was not a lunatic asylum! I descended into the smoke. The sun went out; the chimneys towered round me, belching forth thick volumes.¹²

Hukin was instructed to raise the question at a meeting of the Sheffield Socialists. 'Nobody seemed very enthusiastic tho' – about it', he wrote to Carpenter. Jonathan Taylor who was there was in favour of dealing with all sorts of public nuisances; 'His idea is to keep two or three men constantly employed in seeking out cases and bringing them before the authorities.'¹³ Carpenter, while he was in London, visited 'a variety of firms who consume their own smoke' and examined some of the appliances used for the purpose, such as Vicar's Mechanical Stoker, and wrote another letter to the press, stating that 'it [the smoke nuisance] is perfectly preventable, at a small initial cost to the manufacturer, and with a very considerable economy in the long run'.¹⁴ He also gave a lecture on the 'Smoke Nuisance and its Cure' at Firth College and wrote an article on the

same subject.¹⁵ Once again his proposed remedies were all very practical, and he even recommended such advanced appliances as Siemen's regenerative gas-furnaces or Andrew's helix underfeeder, a coal-consuming furnace. As for domestic fires, he thought, open-fire cooking was 'a barbarism'; so was 'the open coal sitting-room fire'. He was not a mere 'savage' after all. But as a 'Noble Savage' he thought that mechanical civilisation should be made to serve 'the real man'.

Recurring epidemics earlier in the century had forced public attention to the question of the pollution of rivers and streams with the refuse of cities, but air pollution which was 'equally insane' remained largely neglected. It is true that Smoke Abatement Exhibitions were held in 1881 and 1882, but it was only after the publication of Carpenter's letters that the issue was revived, and several Smoke Abatement Associations in the northern towns became actively engaged in promoting the use of smoke-preventing appliances. He was invited to speak for them on the subject. 'I seem to live in trains & travelling-bags. Have just returned from Manchester - where - in the middle of a dense fog - I lectured to 600 or 700 people on the Smoke Nuisance!' he wrote in a letter.¹⁶ All the candidates for the City Council of Sheffield pledged themselves, said Hukin, 'to go straight for the Smoke Fiend'.¹⁷ 'Indeed, I believe we were one of the first bodies in England to tackle the evil of smoke', recalled Carpenter: 'we got a table out into the street, made little speeches, and distributed leaflets and pamphlets. The workpeople mostly jeered. "They want us to do without smoak" they said, "but how can we live without smoak? If there were no smoak there'd be no Tra-ade!"'¹⁸ At any rate the 'Fiend' began to be tackled, and there was some improvement in the atmosphere of the city, but Carpenter, even in his old age, was able to admire blue skies over Sheffield only when there was a strike, and consequently a coal stoppage and the silence of factories. It was an irony, moreover, that the smoke nuisance, the major cause of which he attributed to the profit motives of the manufacturers, could be cured by remedies the adoption of which depended at least partly on the same motives, 'a very considerable economy in the long run' as Carpenter put it.

His campaigns extended to cover a field which, fraught with dissen-

sions and disputes, was not wholly agreeable to him: this was international Socialism. As it happened, all the differences of opinion as to theories, tactics, and organisations in the Socialist world had resulted in an apparently hopeless confusion of factions and alliances, from which now emerged the two congresses to inaugurate the Second International, one mainly 'Possibilist' or reformist, the other mainly Marxist or revolutionary, both held in Paris in July 1889. Carpenter himself felt that the existence of the two congresses was 'to a great extent accidental, and due probably more to jealousies between individual leaders than to any great political differences in the masses of the delegates themselves'.¹⁹ Even so it was largely because he had greater sympathy for Morris than for Hyndman, then a special ally of the Possibilists, that Carpenter went to the *Fantaisies Parisiennes*, a little music-hall in the rue Rochechouart, where the Marxist congress was held. There he found that 'the practical types dominated, dress tending rather sadly . . . to bourgeois black and general respectability'.²⁰

In his letters to the Sheffield Socialists he gave a good account of the proceedings there. On the question of the fusion of the two congresses, 'I voted for Liebknecht instead of for Domela [Nieuwenhuis] because Domela's motion would have simply merged us into the political socialist party', while Liebknecht expressed desire for union but left the subject to be further considered when a similar expression had been made by the other congress. The latter was carried by 11 nations against 4 for Domela and 2 for a third motion. 'This does not take long to record', he wrote: 'but it took 6 hours to transact. We sat from 10 to 4, regardless of dinner - martyrs to the cause! The noise & excitement at times were terrific . . . I would have liked to speak, but the immense number of people sending in their names to speak made it hopeless & ultimately the closure was applied.' The Possibilist congress also passed a motion in favour of fusion, and a commission to consider the matter was to be set up, consisting of five delegates from each side. Morris declined to serve when his name was proposed. 'Morris evidently does not like the idea of a fusion; but I think it is obviously wrong to *refuse* it - & I suppose he does too.'²¹

Carpenter, in another sketch of the congress written many years later, summed up its achievements by saying that resolutions passed

in favour of a general and compulsory eight-hour day, a citizen army, and a May-day labour demonstration did not sufficiently convey the real significance of that week in Paris. 'To see these 450 men at the Fantaisies, many of them seamed with scars, and bearing on hands or bodies the traces of hard and life-long toil,' he wrote,

to note their grave, earnest faces, and well-weighed but not always glib words; to perceive the high standard of intelligence in them and their leaders. . . and then to remember that another equal body was holding its sessions at the same time a few streets distant – passing practically the *same* resolutions – all this was to feel the pulse of a new movement extending throughout Europe, and emanating from every branch and department of labour with throbs of power and growing vitality. . . It was good and promising; and few I think could have gone away at the conclusion without feeling that with the Congress of 1889 a new era in the Labour movement had begun.²²

The spirit of fraternity, however, was not easily to be put into practice in the world of labour. It is true, the International Working Men's Association or the First International had served the cause of labour by preventing the introduction of foreign strike breakers. But was the influx of the unskilled labourers from abroad, especially those who belonged to the persecuted minority in their own countries, to be equally discouraged? Carpenter was a protectionist so far as labour was concerned. Referring to the Polish Jew, he said it 'may be advisable during transition to keep him out!' Hopes for an increase in demand for labour that could be expected from an eight-hour bill would be frustrated by the competition of foreigners. 'While we are fighting we mustn't be handicapped.'²³

Personally he was more kindly inclined to the unfortunate immigrants. He came to know a young Jew who called himself Max Flint, anglicised from Flyncck. Max, the son of a Jewish butcher at Slobodka near Kovno, Poland, had fled from the threat of Russian conscription. Aided by professional migration agents he came to Leeds where he settled down to sweated work in a Jewish tailor's den in the community of several hundred Russian or Polish Jew *émigrés*. 'You escape from the horror of the Russian army. . . only to sit cross-legged for the rest of your life in a dirty, evil-smelling workshop. . . in the heart of a sad-eyed smoke-ridden manufacturing town in the North of England', wrote Carpenter.²⁴ Max Flint soon

developed the symptoms of tuberculosis; also to the dismay and anger of the Jewish community, he joined the Socialist Club in Leeds, which helped to organise a strike of the Jewish workers; Tom Maguire wrote 'The Song of the Sweater's Victims' for this occasion.²⁵ Carpenter met Max Flint when he went to speak in Leeds. Katharine St John Conway, a recent recruit to Socialism at Bristol, of whom more later, was visiting the Leeds Socialist Club about this time. At the clubroom she heard Tom Maguire telling a characteristic story:

Edward Carpenter came to lecture. I told him about the lad [Max] and felt a bit disappointed that he didn't go over to speak to him. He gave his lecture and stood talking with some of us till it was train time. Then quite abruptly, he left us and went to where the Jewish boy was sitting. 'You will come home with me', he said. The lad looked up at him - Oh! I can't tell you how he looked . . . Carpenter just took his hand and they went out together and down to the station. None of us dared go with them. He nursed the lad till he died.²⁶

In fact, Max stayed with him at Millthorpe and helped in sandal and basket making. As his conditions did not improve, Carpenter sent him to a convalescent home first at Brighton and then at Bournemouth where he died in 1902.

To some of his working-men friends, Carpenter was a fatherly, even saintly figure. They loved and revered him, and he basked in their friendship and affection. 'All goes well with me', he wrote to Whitman in the early summer of 1889: 'I am brown & hardy - & tho' I live mostly alone I have more friends almost than a man ought to have'.²⁷

Among Carpenter's many working-men friends, there was James M. Brown, a tailor by trade, 'one of the most well-loved and influential of the Glasgow Socialists of that time' and a poet.²⁸ As his poor health required that he should live in the country, Carpenter found lodgings for him at Dore near Sheffield. He now became a member of the Sheffield Socialist Society, and Carpenter described him in his memoirs as 'the very picture of kindness and broad good-sense'.²⁹ Brown was an intimate friend of 'Bob' with whom Carpenter himself had a special link, for 'Bob' was no other person than Robert Franklin Muirhead, the Cambridge mathematician and

Glasgow Socialist whom we have already seen addressing a crowd in Sheffield and again witnessing the police 'brutality' on Bloody Sunday. He was then staying in London, making his living as a coach in mathematics. Though a homosexual himself, he was greatly admired by Olive Schreiner who later described him as 'rare in gifts of heart'.³⁰

Several letters Carpenter wrote to Brown before the latter's removal to Dore show the happy state of friendship that he described to Whitman. 'My dear James, I feel very selfish having Bob here when you are hungering for him at Beith', he wrote from Millthorpe:

but then you know it is not my fault: he moves by laws of his own, with the primitive insouciance of the Sunshine & the Showers. He has taken up his abode here – and I accepted him, gracefully as I do a fine day, and ask no question! His character unfolds to me in the singular & native perfection. . . . On Monday we were down in Sheffield & went to our Society Committee meeting in the evening. . . . Shortland came over here Sunday before last & chummed a little with Bob – he is a nice fellow, very sensitive & intelligent – seemingly much out of place in Sheffield Smoke.³¹

Jim Shortland was an engine fitter, described later by Carpenter as 'handsome, fiery and athletic'.³² 'He is a dear fellow', he wrote in another letter to Brown, 'and somehow curiously reminds me of Bob – tho' I can't nail the likeness to any particular point. He stayed Saturday night with me & then on Sunday we went (with a bicycle between us) to Chesterfield for an evening meeting in the market place.' There he met a navvy called Andrew Hall who spoke on Socialism almost every Sunday in Chesterfield. Carpenter himself gave a speech, and Shortland sang one or two songs.³³ Then in December the unpredictable 'Bob' returned to Millthorpe, and in the following month Carpenter was again writing to Brown who was still at Beith:

Bob was very sweet & lovely while he was here and I loved him very much – more I think than ever, and he was very good to me. I think it is about the very first time to have been alone together at Millthorpe. . . . Both evenings we bathed & ran about naked. His figure is so splendid, and his face too. Do you know it never struck me before, but his type is not unlike the Greek statues: and I have been wondering whether that explains the peculiarly simple strong native cast of his mind.³⁴

Carpenter's 'affair' with Bob lingered on for some time, while his once tangled relations with George Hukin sobered down to a cordial, though still affectionate, friendship: Hukin remained his most important link with Sheffield workers. Early in April 1889, Carpenter was in London with Hukin who went up to give evidence before the Lords' Committee on Sweating. On 4 April Hukin appeared before the Committee and gave an account of the circumstances in which an ill-paid, old pen-blade grinder died of overwork. The cause of low prices and consequent overwork, he said, was 'the keen competition that exists everywhere', and therefore, no master, nor sweater, nor workman should be blamed. It was 'a mere phase of economic development'. He would, however, support an eight-hour day as he believed it to be a way out from this economic impasse.³⁵ Being a small master himself (though he strenuously denied it before the Commission), he had occasions to visit the 'Grinding Wheels' in search of razor grinders, where he did his best to organise them into a trade union.³⁶ This was only an instance of the great expansion of trade unionism, especially among the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, that was taking place about this time.

Indeed, Carpenter had produced a marching song for the great army of labour. But was he really prepared to join in the upheaval of the masses?

EIGHT

LABOUR AND ANARCHISM

THE rise of New Unionism, as it was called, took place at a time of full employment, but Socialist influence was unmistakable. It was Mrs Annie Besant, then a prominent Fabian, and Herbert Burrows of the SDF that had helped to organise the match-girls at Bryant and May's in 1888 whose success heralded the era of the revolt of labour. And Mrs Besant was a great admirer of Carpenter. She was said to have read 'nothing but [Carpenter]' whenever she was tired and weary. For her journal, *Our Corner*, Carpenter wrote a poem entitled 'Democracy' in which the word Democracy sounded more urgently millenarian than ever, faintly echoing the rise of the unskilled workers.¹

In 1890 the great strike of London dockers that arose from a pay dispute was led by several prominent Socialists such as H. H. Champion, John Burns, Tom Mann, and Eleanor Marx. Olive Schreiner, who was in London at the time, wrote to Carpenter:

Isn't the strike splendid. You ought to see the East End now. The strange earnest look in the people's faces, that sort of wide-eyed look. You look straight into their faces & their eyes look back at you; they are possessed with a large idea. It's very wonderful. I went yesterday to the place where the Salvation Army are giving away tiny packets of tea. About 500 men were there standing in rows waiting. The serious, silent, elate atmosphere, the look in the face of the most drunken old man was wonderful. I think I never felt so full of hope as yesterday. But perhaps you are here seeing it.²

It is not clear whether Carpenter visited the dockers himself; even if he had done so, he certainly left no account of the strike. His refer-

ences to trade unions are infrequent. In January 1890 he delivered a speech for the Bristol Socialist Society on 'Breakdown of our Industrial System', and his lecture notes contained something on the subject: 'Trade Unions: to win wages, 8 hour bills &c., but more solidarity of workers. Old unions were benefit society. . . Nationalisation, Municipalisation, Parochial, Local. Join the Socialist Movement.'³

He probably agreed with *Freedom*, the Anarchist paper, when it declared:

One of the most satisfactory features of the agitation was the apparent disappearance of the various Socialist bodies as such. The names of organisations seldom transpired, but Socialism and Socialists were everywhere. . . Political humbug disappeared from the Socialist propaganda as soon as our comrades in the various societies found themselves face to face with a live workers' movement.

The paper welcomed the formation of several new trade unions which would bring the workers into line for social revolution if they remained unspoiled by attempts at centralisation.⁴ The new movement, however, soon lapsed into what Harry Quelch of the SDF described as 'the old unionism applied to unskilled labour',⁵ something very remote from social revolution or rather a safeguard against it.

The early Anarchists (or the Anarchists of all ages for that matter) can be divided into two groups, the destructive and the respectable. Prominent among the latter at the time was Mrs Charlotte Wilson, the 'forceful young blue-stocking from Girton' and a member of the Fabian Society, who was married to a stockbroker.⁶ She patronised Peter Kropotkin when he came to England, and with his help founded *Freedom* in October 1886. In March 1887 Mrs Wilson and Kropotkin visited Sheffield and spoke at a meeting organised by the local Socialist Society. 'A Sheffield factory is a heartrending spectacle', wrote Mrs Wilson: 'The noisy, dirty, stifling workshops, crowded with pale, worn, hollow, hopeless faces'. She was encouraged to find Carpenter and other Sheffield Socialists launching an energetic propaganda. 'Its headquarters are the old debtors' jail! There is a smart and tempting coffee tavern. . . The Society itself tends to become more and more revolutionary, more Anarchist in tone, as its

members think out the economic problem for themselves and learn to appreciate the practical uselessness of attempts at "Parliamentary action".⁷ Mrs Wilson also visited Millthorpe, and as she put it, 'shared the beautiful homeliness of its life of genuine human equality in honest labour and well earned rest and recreation'.⁸

Carpenter, for his part, helped Kropotkin to elaborate his theory of Anarchism by sending him materials on the 'petty trades' in Sheffield, which the latter used in his article on 'the Industrial Village of the Future', a preliminary work for his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. There Kropotkin pointed out, on the strength of information supplied by Carpenter, that Sheffield cutlery manufacturers let out some of their work to the 'small masters' and by far the greatest number of cutlers worked in their homes or in small workshops.⁹ All this was to bolster up his own analysis of the capitalist economy which, in contradistinction with the emphasis Marx placed on the concentration of capital, was centred around the survival or even the fresh emergence of small industries. This, thought Kropotkin, was essentially meaningful for his vision of the industrial village which would combine industrial and agricultural work for the benefit of the producers. Carpenter was apparently inclined to agree with Kropotkin rather than Marx, though Kropotkin himself almost believed that Marx would have agreed with him if he had lived on.

Since the time of the First International when Bakunin challenged Marx and the British section upheld the principle of federalism, Anarchism, especially Bakunin's destructive Anarchism, somehow threaded its way through the ups and downs of the movement of popular protest in Britain. Frank Kitz, a garment dyer, who had been associated with the International, volunteered to edit an English edition of *Freiheit*, Johann Most's Anarchist paper, when it was suppressed for an article extolling the assassination of the Czar Alexander II in 1881. Kitz and Joseph Lane of the Labour Emancipation League, which was avowedly Anarchist, were soon on the Council of the Socialist League; and now at last, the sudden awakening of the unskilled workers enabled Anarchist gospel to penetrate into some of the working-class organisations especially in the East End of London.

The Anarchists had gained control of the Council of the Socialist League at its annual conference in 1888 and captured its organ *Commonweal* in the course of 1890, Morris quitting it altogether by the end of the year. Compared with the more prosperous West End branches of the League like Morris's at Hammersmith, the East Enders more easily drifted into Anarchism.¹⁰ Various Anarchist clubs and societies sprang up in East London, and in the summer of 1890 'a Revolutionary Conference' was held at the Berner Street Club where it was agreed to propagate the idea of a general strike among the workers.¹¹ Anarchist influence was felt in many parts of the country. In Manchester an Anarchist club was started by local League members. A Freedom Group was formed in Norwich, one of the strongholds of the League from its early days. The Leeds Socialist Club also fell into the hands of the Anarchists at the termination of the great gas strike there, and Maguire withdrew from it.¹² The Sheffield Socialist Society which had throughout maintained its freedom from the centripetal tendencies of a national party was particularly vulnerable to their influence.

Indeed, confusion seemed to prevail among the Sheffield Socialists when Robert Bingham, a provision merchant and an active member, proposed that they should join the League or the SDF and become a branch of one of the two national Socialist bodies. Hukin, secretary of the Society, called a meeting of all the members to decide the issue. He was annoyed by Bingham's opportunistic hankering after a revolution.¹³ The proposal, however, was not seriously considered, or perhaps Bingham himself changed his mind, for he was coming under Anarchist influence.

Fred C. Slaughter, known as 'Fred Charles', who had been the leading spirit of the Norwich branch of the Socialist League, now appeared on the scene. He was associated with Joseph Lane, the veteran Anarchist, and when East End branches of the League formed an East-End Socialist Propaganda Committee, he became its secretary.¹⁴ He was only twenty-five when he came to Sheffield, where he worked as a clerk at Bingham's. The Sheffield Socialists had just opened a new club at Blonk Street, and soon called themselves the 'Socialist Club' rather than the 'Socialist Society'.

'Charles and some others of our fellows are busy with another strike here', wrote Hukin to Carpenter. This was a strike that began

in November 1889 at the 'Patent Flue' department of John Brown and Co.'s Works. 'There are 28 on strike', continued Hukin, '& some 9 blacklegs have gone in their places, and whenever the blacklegs come out they are followed by the strikers, yelling & hooting and raising all the neighbourhood.'¹⁵ The work for the strikers was left in the hands of Charles and Bingham. Thus at a meeting organised by the Socialist Club at the Monolith on 22 December, Bingham was reported to have made an 'inflammatory address' in which he said that killing a traitor was not a murder. Six days later two men employed as 'new hands' at Brown's were attacked by men who were allegedly incited by Bingham's speech. Bingham was indicted under the charge that he 'unlawfully did encourage, persuade, and endeavour to persuade divers persons to murder' the two blacklegs. 'George A. came in as soon as I got home to tell me all about the joke at the Police-Court to-day', wrote Hukin. George Adams had assisted at the meeting of 22 December. 'The speech complained of really is a *bit too* strong', said Hukin: 'George tells me that as it was read in court it sounded "just awful"! and I can quite imagine it would! I do hope he would get off tho'.¹⁶ At the Leeds Assizes held in the same month, the jury found Bingham guilty of using language which might lead to serious consequences but not guilty of an intent to incite to murder, in short not guilty under the indictment. Bingham's martyrdom was thus avoided, and Carpenter flattered himself that a letter he wrote to the *Leeds Mercury* 'scolding' Mr Justice Grantham had had a good effect on the jury.¹⁷

The Sheffield Socialist Club at Blonk Street issued what Carpenter called 'our new Manifesto', *An Appeal to Workers*. This was in fact an Anarchist manifesto with some 'stepping stones' grudgingly added to it. It declared that no remedy for the present evils would be possible except 'the resumption by the People, for their own use, of the Land and Capital of their respective countries'. All other efforts, 'even Trade Unions and Strikes' would be 'of little use or no use' unless they were made to serve this end. Parliament was not even mentioned. They would strive for 'a perfectly free Society', but they were 'ready also to help in the general Labour-movement. . . in the direction of a shorter Working Day, suppression of the Contract and Sweating Systems, spread of Trade Unions, &c.'¹⁸

Carpenter apparently shared the revolutionary sentiments expressed in this manifesto. In a letter to Alf Mattison, the Leeds Socialist, he wrote: 'Everything seems to be rushing on faster & faster! Where are we going? Niagara, or the Islands of the Blest?'¹⁹ He himself became a little impatient, as is shown by his letter to Bruce Glasier, secretary of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League until 1889:

I am waiting anxiously for to-day's paper to see the results of the 1st of May on the continent. It is a grand movement. We are having a 'do' on Monday in Sheffield – processions and speeches, but I don't think it will be taken up very warmly by the people generally. . . Charles & Bingham keep pushing away here & doing some good work. Muirhead is staying with me just now – for a few days – will probably be in Glasgow next week. Yes one gets rather sick waiting for the S.R. at times! I sometimes think it will never come in this country – only an S.E. (without the R!) which would be in many ways disappointing.²⁰

Just as abruptly as he had left for America when the handful of early Socialists argued hotly over the tactics to hasten 'the S.R.', Carpenter now disappeared into the eastern horizon at a time when a 'Niagara' was more or less expected at home. He was lured by the sun, both spiritual and physical, that shone beyond the seas. It was a very cold summer. 'The *cold* is awful – thermometer at 50°, my stove roaring, windows shut, thick clothes on – O for Ceylon', he wrote in August 1890.²¹ In October he left for Ceylon, stayed there and in India for several months, and came home the following spring. His trip and all its edifying as well as mystifying effects require a chapter of their own. Here it will suffice to record his absence from the scene and to note that this made it easier for the Anarchist fire-eaters to carry the Sheffield Socialists away with them.

On 11 November 1890 the Sheffield Socialists held a meeting commemorating the Chicago Anarchist Martyrs. 'After that', wrote Hukin: 'they'll all be busy making final arrangements for the Revolution! which Brown says is to come off some time in January next.'²² Reporting the meeting to Carpenter in Ceylon, he quoted the bizarre speech made by Andrew Hall, the Socialist veteran from Chesterfield, who

during his speech suddenly dropped upon his knees & well I'll give you his own words – 'With the *shadow* of the rope hanging over me I call upon each of you to vow with me that we will meet every November to celebrate &c. and that we will never rest till the murder of our Comrades has been avenged – blood for blood & life for life &c. &c.' There was a good big meeting & nearly everybody present held up their hands for the vow. I must say I didn't like the proceedings much – too much blood & vengeance about it – the speakers one after another, talked of little else than the revenge they were going to take on the Capitalists before long!²³

The arrival in Sheffield of 'our comrade Dr. Creaghe' was announced in *Commonweal*, which had become virtually an Anarchist organ; the doctor, it said, would soon be 'helping us to get the Rev. over speedily'.²⁴ John Creaghe was a licentiate of the Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons of Ireland, and two foreign diplomas he had received enabled him, he felt, to dub himself Doctor. And he was called either a 'six-penny doctor' or a quack. He had just returned from a visit to Buenos Aires where he had been connected with a revolutionary movement. He opened a dispensary in the city and also a branch at Attercliffe more for the purpose of selling Socialist and Freethought literature. It so happened that Charles was 'sacked' about this time by Bingham who was jealous of his able employee; Creaghe asked Charles to stay with him to help him. As a result Bingham and several others resigned from the Club which was now dominated by Creaghe and his Anarchist friends, and Hukin, too, avoided further contact with it. 'I think the whole thing will collapse very soon & a fresh start made more on the old lines. I'm afraid Charles – in spite of himself – has a way of putting everything at loggerheads somehow.'²⁵ Brown agreed with this sentiment: 'Charles is still out of work, and the Club is still at sixes and sevens. Everything has gone wrong since you left', he wrote to Carpenter.²⁶

In January 1891 Hukin informed Carpenter that Creaghe, Charles and some others were going to form an Anarchist group with the motto 'No God, No Master'.²⁷ In March Creaghe was fined for using 'a dangerous weapon', a poker, to drive out a bailiff who came to his Attercliffe dispensary with a writ of execution for £1 12s. od. he owed to his landlady. Creaghe chose to call his petty revenge 'the No-Rent campaign', but the Socialist Club had to leave Blonk Street,

and its business remained disrupted for some time. However, he somehow managed to start a fortnightly organ, the *Sheffield Anarchist*, in July. It is quite possible that he obtained the necessary funds probably unwittingly from someone who was actually in the pay of the police, and to this aspect of the movement we shall shortly return. At any rate Creaghe claimed that 600 copies of its first number were sold on a single Sunday and it advocated the No-rent campaign. An Anti-Property Association was formed, and the *Sheffield Anarchist* reported the 'brave fight of poachers with Gamekeeper at the Duke of Devonshire's preserves at Chatsworth'.²⁸ The paper, edited by Creaghe and Cyril Bell, a medical student and school teacher, and consisting mostly of a reproduction of articles from *Commonweal* and *L'Homme Libre*, dragged out an irregular and precarious existence till October, and in November Creaghe left Sheffield for Liverpool. The reason for his removal is not clear, but by now he had become an open advocate of dynamite. He also became a believer in 'pillage' which, as he confessed, was the only way after all for a man like him to make a living. Apparently the workers did not flock to his dispensary in Sheffield. 'I have a protest to make', he wrote:

and that is against the protesters such as W. Morris and Edward Carpenter. The latter has lately published in the *Workman's Times* some very pretty verses most thoroughly Anarchist in sentiment and which directly incite the workers to the pillage of their robbers as well as contempt for all the nonsense of law and authority. And yet this same Carpenter in conversations disavows all connexion with Anarchists, belauds Fabians and Trade Unionists who he must know are doing harm if he be logical; and he has never except in a half-hearted way done anything to support our propaganda in Sheffield – a propaganda which must have had the sympathy and support of all good Anarchists.²⁹

Creaghe's protest had some force in it, for it pointed to the dilemma of a liberal intellectual in the revolutionary movement, the familiar dichotomy between preaching and practice. Carpenter, for his part, replied to Creaghe by appealing for unity of forces:

Certainly, Comrade Creaghe, I stick up for the Fabians and the Trade Unions just as I do for the Anarchists. I have never disavowed the Anarchists. What can be more obvious? We are all travelling along the

same road. Why should we be snarling at one another's heels? I know that some of the Fabians look upon the Anarchists as bloody fools, and I tell them that I disagree with them; and I know that some of the Anarchists (so-called) would like to send all Trade Unionists and Fabians to the devil, and I tell them that I disagree with *them* . . . I take it we have all our work to do in our own line.³⁰

The controversy well exemplified the clash of the two types of logic in the Socialist movement, the two methods of arriving at truth, the one by eliminating errors in various proposals, or rather eliminating one's opponents if one believed one was right, and the other by eclectically picking up elements of truth from seemingly contradictory tendencies. It also reflected the two types of Anarchists already referred to, the one destructive and conspiratorial, perhaps Bakunist, and the other gentle and respectable, probably Kropotkinite or rather Carpentarian. As a transcendentalist Carpenter was all in favour of a united front, united by a larger self, but his words 'all travelling along the same road' sounded like Sir William Harcourt's maxim, 'We are all Socialists now'. Creaghe rejoined, declaring that he was an iconoclast. 'If I have been a bit rough in dealing with Carpenter the reason is that I have been disgusted to see how he has been made an idol of in Sheffield, and it is our duty to overthrow all idols, especially such very false ones.'³¹

The veneration, if not idolisation, in which Carpenter was held among the Sheffield Socialists, perhaps saved him and them from falling a prey to police agents such as Auguste Coulon who had posed as a violent Anarchist and had gained much influence among the extremists. Coulon, who had previously had some connections with the French Possibilists, came into the British movement in January 1890 when he joined a London branch of the Socialist League. Among the West End Anarchists he sold a little French book *L'Indicateur Anarchiste*, a text-book for manufacturing bombs and dynamite. He somehow gained the confidence of Fred Charles who was out of employment at the time. As we have already suggested, it is possible that the *Sheffield Anarchist* itself was started with the funds supplied by Coulon. Yet Coulon must soon have realised that Sheffield was not a fit place for a subversive operation. Dr Creaghe would have been a small catch, and Carpenter and

his friends were too cautious to be lured into any revolutionary deed.

In July 1891 Charles moved to Walsall where he joined the local Socialist club. Joseph Thomas Deakin, a railway clerk and leading member of the club, welcomed him, and found him a job at the house of John Westley, a brush manufacturer, who lived near the club and acted as its secretary. Charles, who spoke several languages, later obtained the post of clerk and translator at Gameson's iron foundry. Coulon was also looking after refugees from the continent, among whom was Victor Cailes, a stoker, who was wanted by the French police for an incendiary speech he had made at the First of May demonstration at his native town of Nantes. In June he was sent to Walsall, where he was employed in brush-making at Westley's.

Late in October a mysterious letter written in French and signed 'Degnai' was sent to Cailes, inquiring whether the bombs according to a sketch enclosed could be made in Walsall. As Cailes knew neither the name nor the writing, Deakin on his behalf wrote to Coulon, who replied that it was all right. Charles and Cailes explained the contents of the original letter to Deakin and assured him that the bombs were intended for Russia. A pattern was made, and an ironfounder was engaged, but the latter found it impossible to proceed because of defects in the pattern itself.

Meanwhile in London, Coulon was busy with other plots. He started a chemistry class among young enthusiasts in which the 'Great God Dynamite' was worshipped in secret. He was allowed by the editor of *Commonweal*, David Nicoll, who was not aware of Coulon's sinister background, to continue his 'International Notes' in the paper. Next door to Coulon's house in Fitzroy Street, there lived an Italian shoemaker called Jean Battola whom the police allegedly identified with 'Degnai' the mysterious conspirator. On 5 December Battola appeared in Walsall to collect some of the bombs that were expected to be ready. As there was a delay in manufacturing the bombs, he returned empty-handed. At the Walsall station he was seen by Police Inspector Melville who apparently employed Coulon. Later at the trial Melville said: 'He would not swear that he had not paid Coulon money, for he had paid lots of Anarchists money.' From the time of Battola's visit all the prominent members of the Walsall Socialist Club were shadowed by detectives.

On 6 January 1892 Deakin was arrested in Tottenham Court Road on his way to the Autonomie Club, an Anarchist club frequented by foreigners. On the following day Charles, Cailes, and Ditchfield who made the model of the bombs were arrested. Coulon was allowed to disappear.³²

All the prisoners were tried at the assizes at Stafford under the Explosive Substances Act of 1883. The Government paid serious attention to the case, and Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General, prosecuted in person. It was in fact the trial of Anarchism by its enemy the State. In opening the case for the Crown, the Attorney-General quoted extensively from the 'Means of Emancipation', a manuscript document written in French by Cailes and found in Charles' lodgings:

First, in order to arrive at a complete emancipation of humanity, brutal force is indispensable. . . Then. . . it is absolutely necessary to burn the churches, palaces, convents, soldier-barracks, prefectures, lawyers' and barristers' offices, fortresses, prisons, and to destroy entirely all that has lived till now by business work without contributing to it.³³

Commonweal declared that 'there is nothing in this document with which any Anarchist disagree',³⁴ and this set the tone of the trial. W. M. Thompson, the well-known Radical barrister, defending the prisoners, sought to expose the villain Coulon, but his efforts were frustrated by the Judge who intervened 'in the interest of the public service'. On the third day Carpenter appeared as a witness to Charles's character. He described himself as formerly a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and said that he had made Charles's acquaintance at the Sheffield Socialist Club - 'He [Charles] was reputed to be a generous, tender-hearted man.' Cross-examined by the Attorney-General he admitted that he was himself an Anarchist. The defence counsel for Charles, however, obtained from Carpenter a statement that he did not sympathise with violence or the use of bombs and he did not regard it as an integral part of true Anarchism.³⁵

On the last day, after the jury returned with a verdict of guilty for Charles, Cailes, Battola and Deakin, with a strong recommendation of mercy for the last, the accused were allowed to make statements. Charles assured the court that he repudiated violence. It was true that he sought to make bombs, but it was to help his friends in

Russia fighting against the barbarous system of Government there that he had lent his aid in making the bombs. 'A reconstruction of society must be effected by such violent methods in a comparatively recent nationality like that of Russia, not in an old and long-settled country like England. When he found these bombs were not intended for Russia he at once abandoned any connection with them.' Battola also made an eloquent appeal: 'Coulon it was who ought to be tried and who ordered the bombs.' Cailes made a brief address. After this the learned Judge sentenced Charles, Cailes and Battola to ten years and Deakin to five years penal servitude. *The Times* declared that the crime of which the Walsall Anarchists had been convicted was 'part of a great system', the object of which was 'to annihilate civil society as it exists', and it was 'no time to deal lightly with such crimes'.³⁶ The *Saturday Review* sought to implicate Carpenter morally in the alleged crime: 'Cailes and Battola played Marat and Robespierre in the little rehearsal of a revolution in which Mr. Carpenter had a part'. 'To be sure', it added, 'it may be alleged as an excuse that the Theoretical Anarchist, with his University Extension lectures, is a much thinner creature than Luther, Knox, or the Marians. So he is, and it is a case of like master like man, as usual.'³⁷

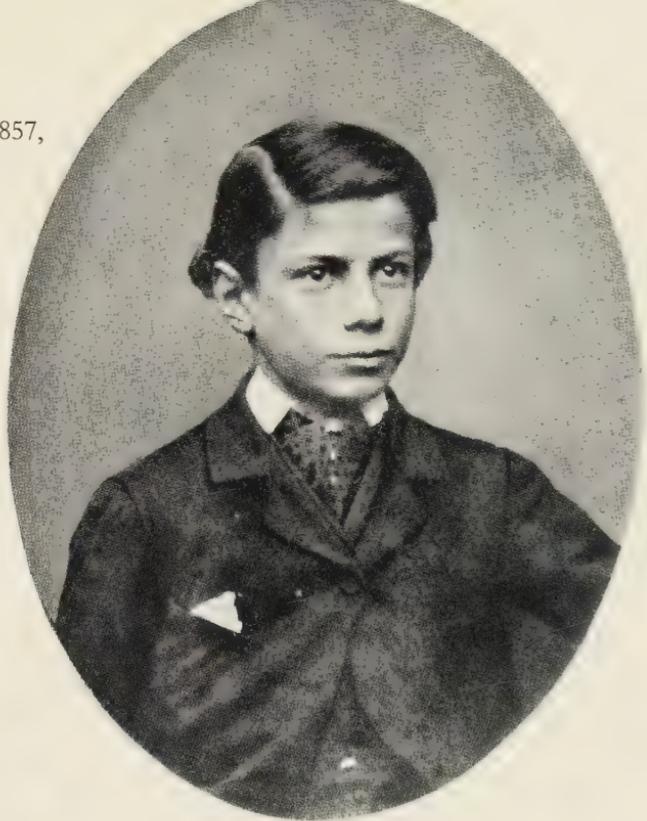
Creaghe, who repudiated such a master, was soon on his way back to South America. Carpenter now broke silence and wrote to *Freedom*. *Agents provocateurs*, he said, were 'a recognised part of our judicial system', and 'it would be absurd, and would only weaken our position, to speak as if none of the Anarchist party ever contemplated the use of violence'. His line of defence was to make an indictment of the existing society and institutions that necessitated such a form of opposition.³⁸

The trial of the Walsall Anarchists marked the culmination of Carpenter's work for Socialism. Apparently his millenarian hopes received a hard blow as a result of the circumstances and outcome of the trial, while his profound contempt for bourgeois law and institutions was no doubt confirmed and strengthened. He was alone among the prominent Socialists of the day in defending the cause of violence, though not individual acts of violence. William Morris, in the words of his biographer, refused to condone 'the Anarchist folly which had been so deliberately engineered to discredit the left'.³⁹

Yet some of Carpenter's closest friends felt that he had not done enough. James Brown, who died in 1893, left letters which showed that in the Walsall crisis he had come to the conclusion that Carpenter could not be relied upon to play a thoroughly Socialist part.⁴⁰ His view of his erstwhile master was not far from that of Creaghe.

During the years of New Unionism Carpenter neglected the trade unions. It is true that he disowned his own class, and associated freely with the workers as an individual, but he apparently sensed that he was not really able to help the trade unions, the class organisation of the workers. It was perhaps the same with the Anarchist workers. The fact was that an anticlimax in his career as a Socialist had come even before the Walsall crisis: his visit to the East.

Carpenter in 1857,
aged thirteen



Carpenter in 1875,
aged about thirty-two

Charles Carpenter



Sophia Wilson Carpenter
in 1864



Charles George Oates (centre), with
Mrs Oates and Carpenter



Albert Fearnough and 'Bruno', Carpenter's dog



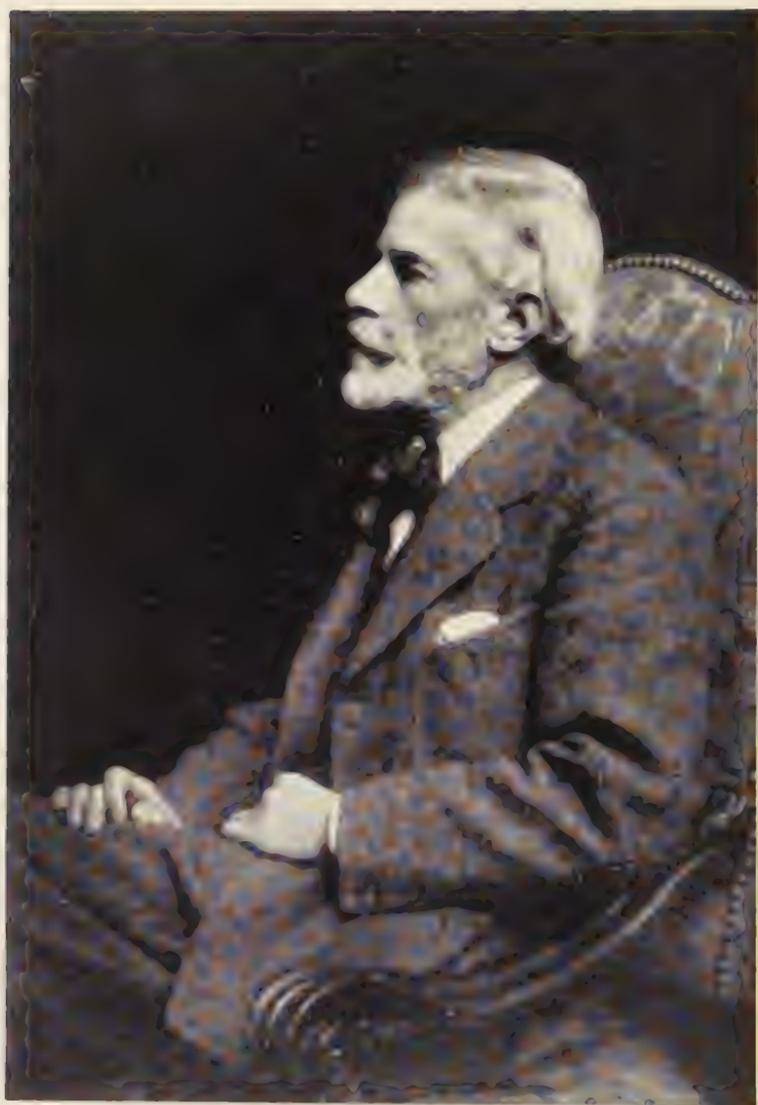
Carpenter at Millthorpe in 1905



Carpenter with George Hukin (left), George Merrill
(centre front) and an unidentified friend



Carpenter with George Merrill



Carpenter in 1910, aged sixty-six

NINE

JOURNEY TO THE EAST

CARPENTER'S INTEREST in Indian mysticism preceded his studies of Marx and Kropotkin by several years. Yet his idea of spiritual democracy, which was at the basis of his Socialism, was firmly rooted in the Western concept of man's evolution after his legendary fall. Carpenter interpreted the fall as a loss of 'unity' in primitive man who had lived in harmony with himself and nature. Through the development of self-knowledge on the one hand, and through the influence of property and government on the other – the latter completing his alienation 'from Nature', 'from his true Self', and 'from his Fellows' – man descends into hell and sounds 'the depths of alienation from his own divine spirit', and at last turns towards the 'unity' he has lost. Science, 'an attempt to explain Man by Mechanics', cannot attain this 'unity': the Darwinian theory of evolution itself is vitiated by the 'mechanistic' view of causation. Carpenter, as we have already seen, found the secret of man's redemption in the Lamarckian theory which regards desire as the function of variation. And desire in man is 'love' or 'longing for the perfect human Form'.¹ Yet 'love' was not enough in itself: he felt that he would have to explore its religious meanings and reassure himself of its permanence. He eagerly awaited an opportunity to do this by contact, possibly through a *guru*, with the ancient philosophy of the East.

His Singhalese friend Arunáchalam had become a votary of such a *guru*, the Gñani Ramaswamy, and invited him to come to Ceylon and learn from this man. 'He has given me the priceless blessing of

belief in God, which my English education had robbed me of the last twenty years', wrote Arunáchalam to Carpenter, 'You of all my friends are most ripe. So come out to the East and seek the truth.'² Moreover, Carpenter's high-minded idealism now appeared to be somewhat faltering, as Socialism, the movement aspiring for equality, became divided, and he himself was attacked by some of his fellow Socialists. 'I sometimes think I shall go off to India or some distant region before long', wrote Carpenter to Oates: '- not for good! - but to renovate my faith, and unfold the frozen buds which civilisation & fog have nipped!'³

In October 1890, he proceeded to Genoa where he embarked on the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, a Norddeutscher Lloyd steamer. 'The passengers on board are about 500 in number - every nation, creed, language, rank & trade. . . I get a lesson in Tamil every morning from one of the third-class passengers, and I teach several Germans [German emigrants to Australia] English', he wrote to Brown.⁴ The ship reached Colombo on 31 October 'after a most balmy voyage', and he soon moved to Krunegalla about fifty miles from Colombo, where he stayed at Arunáchalam's house as his guest. 'All buried in deep foliage. . . The natives are such gentle, too submissive creatures - with a great hump for religion - there is something very touching about them', he wrote to Mrs Kate Salt, the wife of Henry Salt, whose acquaintance he had made through the Fellowship of the New Life.⁵

In December he visited Kandy, a picturesque lake-side town, and went up to Nuwara Ellis, a little village 6,000 feet above the sea, from where he wrote to Oates: 'There is much that reminds me of Italy in the temperament of the people & climate, but the dark skins & the innumerable palm trees of all kinds prevent any mistake!' He told Oates about a young Singhalese man, 'a good looking chap of the peasant class' called Kalua, with whom he had made friends on board ship, and whom he visited in his little cabin near Kandy.⁶ On New Year's Day 1891 with Kalua and a guide he ascended Adam's Peak, a natural shrine at an altitude of 7,400 feet, reputed to retain the footmark of Buddha on one of its rocks. He found the priests guarding the 'sacred foot' greedy and unpleasant, and then hastened down the mountain and visited a tea plantation where the miserable conditions of 200 Tamil coolies only shocked him. He also visited

Anurádhapura, 'a ruined city in the jungle' – 'it is as if London had again become a wilderness' – and speculated on time and death, on 'the transitory and ineffectual nature of our little human endeavor'. He witnessed the festival of Taypusam as it was celebrated on the night of the first full moon in January in a Hindu temple and was impressed by the worship of sex on that occasion.

The highlight of his pilgrimage in Ceylon was certainly his visit to the Gñani Ramaswamy. Carpenter saw him in a cottage every day for several weeks, perhaps with Arunáchalam as his interpreter. He thought the Gñani resembled the best type of Roman Catholic priest, and listened to his exposition of *gñánam* or Divine knowledge with an absorbing interest. The help of a *guru* was part of the proper initiation into the mystery of this ancient religion which, Carpenter now believed, lay in a new order of consciousness – to which 'for want of a better we may give the name of *universal* or *cosmic* consciousness'. One day the *guru* said to Carpenter: 'the true quality of the soul is that of space, by which it is at rest, everywhere'. This was indeed 'the universe within', the attainment of which was the final goal of the process of initiation. This was the point, as Carpenter understood it, where all the distinctions of castes and classes were thrown aside as of no importance – 'This sense of Equality, of Freedom from regulations and confinements, of Inclusiveness, and of the Life that "rests everywhere", belongs, of course, more to the cosmic or universal part of man than to the individual part.' The method by which one could arrive at this state of consciousness or the region of non-differentiation was the suppression of thought and the subjection of desire.⁷

One might ask what would happen to the individual consciousness, loves and fears of the individual self. To this the *guru* had a ready answer that the individual 'shells', material, sensible or otherwise were to be peeled off successively. This was quite agreeable to Carpenter's own idea of 'exfoliation', according to which the perfect man would finally reveal himself by throwing his past away successively in the pursuit of love. Carpenter, however, felt that the Eastern teaching was defective in that it ignored the very idea of love, 'that positive spirit of love and human helpfulness'. 'In the West', he said, 'we are in the habit of looking on devotion to other humans (widening out into the social passion) as the most natural way of losing

one's self-limitations and passing into a larger sphere of life and consciousness', while in the East they stressed will or the concentration and absorption of oneself in the divine. He believed that the West would stick to its own method, though it would benefit from simultaneous use of the other method.⁸ By this he probably meant to emphasise the idealistic element in love, that new form of consciousness that lay beneath the great instinct of humanity. It was a serene faith in the ultimate destiny of humanity without which even love could not endure.

Towards the end of January 1891 Carpenter crossed over to Tuticorin on the Indian mainland. At Madras he visited the headquarters of the Theosophists who, he thought, were 'doing some useful work – although . . . their teaching is of a somewhat second-hand character'.⁹ In Calcutta he came to know some Bengalis, a schoolmaster and several office clerks. He took the schoolmaster's young brother with him on a journey to Benares where the youth bathed in the sacred river while he sat on the steps watching. At Allahabad he met people who knew his eldest brother; then, through Delhi, he arrived at Agra and wrote to Mrs Salt:

Nations, races, languages, creeds, customs & manners are whirling in my brain. I just realise what an immense place India is. . . This *country* (as far as I have seen it) is not half so beautiful as Ceylon – parched & brown, & even trees looked dwindled for want of water. . . All the youth of any pretensions now read Todhunter's Algebra & Mill's Po. Ec., whether they wear shoes or not – and the spread of Western ideas in politics & science is quite too much for the Anglo-Indian people, who begin to see danger ahead.¹⁰

The terminus of his journey was Bombay where he made the acquaintance of post-office clerks and railway or tramway workers. He visited a native theatre, an opium den, and a cotton mill. Later he wrote a tragic story about an Indian youth who lost his friend in an accident at a Bombay cotton mill.¹¹ As for opium, he does not seem to have tried it himself, but took an indulgent view of it and similar drugs which, he believed, would produce 'some momentary realisation . . . of cosmic consciousness'.¹²

In March Carpenter sailed from Bombay by the SS *Siam*, a P. and O. ship full of Australian 'cornstalks' whose company he

apparently enjoyed. One night on the way to Aden the sea was so smooth that he, standing in the bows, felt almost awe-struck as he realised that there was nothing between himself and the immense universe reflecting the stars. Indeed, all his journey was something like that, 'so smooth, so unruffled, as if one had not really been moving'.¹³ He felt that he had grasped the mystery of the East.

The East was moving, however. Arunáchalam wrote to Carpenter, while the latter was still in India, about the destitution and suffering of the people in India and Ceylon which, he believed, existed without giving any benefit to the British people:

It has only benefited the English capitalists & professional classes. The vaunted administrative capacity of the English is a fiction. They make good policemen & keep order, when the people acquiesce – that is all. If this acquiescence ceases, as it must, when the people rightly or wrongly believe their religion & family life in danger from the Government, the English must pack up & go, & woe to the English capitalist & professional man.¹⁴

In spite of Arunáchalam's eloquent condemnation of British rule in India, Carpenter remained optimistic. In a subsidiary chapter in his book on his Eastern pilgrimage, he wrote that industrialism and mechanical civilisation would do much good by rousing the people and instilling among them the Western idea of progress which still had its value and use there. The Congress movement would become a great political force which would lead, among other things, to 'the gradual *drowning out* of the British rule'. The caste system would be modified, the women would at least be given as much freedom as they had enjoyed before the Muhammedan conquests, and Western science would 'give that definition and *materialism* to the popular thought which is so badly wanting in the India of to-day'.¹⁵ Thus his journey to the East was as much a tour of discovery of the new India that was rising as it was a pilgrimage to the holy temples of the ancient religion for reassurance and reinvigoration of his faith.

In March 1892 Whitman, his Western *guru*, after a prolonged illness died at Camden, New Jersey. Carpenter sent a letter of condolence to Horace Traubel, Whitman's disciple, who comforted him till the very end. 'Much as I realized his vitality and tenacity, I never

thought that he would die so hard. He certainly seems to have experienced all of death – in himself as well as in others – as one may say he has experienced all of life. For his death I feel only thankfulness'.¹⁶

Death was liberation, liberation from one's limited self or 'shells', and one's 'entry into the fulness of the whole universe'. This in fact was the essence of the teachings of the Eastern *guru*, which was now grafted on the theory of exfoliation which Carpenter had learned from Whitman partly. 'What a good thing even that our bodies die! How thankful we ought to be that they are duly interred and done with in course of time', he had remarked when he visited that ruined city of Anurádhapura in Ceylon: 'Fancy if we were condemned always to go on in the same identical forms, each of us, repeating the same ancient jokes, making the same wise remarks, priding ourselves on the same superiorities over our fellows, enduring the same insults from them . . . – what a fate!'¹⁷

Early in 1892 the third edition of *Towards Democracy* came out with the new third part entitled 'After Civilisation' added to it. 'I think the new part is fully up to the old standard', wrote Henry Salt:

The 'Satan' piece ['The Secret of Time and Satan'] is splendid (I believe *you* must have been the author of the Book of Job, in a previous existence); so are the democratic pieces – so, in fact, is it all. I have been realizing more fully than ever that you have added one to the Scripture of the world. How is one ever to thank you adequately for this book? I opened accidentally yesterday on 'Have Faith', & was re-reading the passage about the animals, which is to me the very noblest word spoken on that subject. Yet it is no better than many other passages. Being desirous of avoiding a reputation for 'gushing' (with K [Mrs Salt]'s awful example in mind!), I decline to tell you my opinion of *T.D.*¹⁸

A book review will reveal the reviewer as much as the book. Hyndman, assuming superior judgement, found fault with the 'poetic prose, strangely punctuated and broken up', but admitted that there were many passages that 'suggest deep reflection', quoting as an example a piece entitled 'The Elder Soldier in the Brotherhood to the Younger'.¹⁹ J. M. Robertson, a freethinker and future Liberal politician, also had no stomach for Carpenter's style, but was more kindly inclined to his gospel. 'Carpenter', he wrote, 'is better worth

hearing as a teacher than Carlyle; as well worth hearing as Emerson; he compares, for sociological perception, with Ruskin at his best, and he never falls into Ruskin's insanities. His worst crudities are just democratic extravagances on the lines of Whitman's.²⁰ George Julian Harney, the aging veteran Chartist, assuming far more superiority than Hyndman, contemptuously dismissed *Towards Democracy* because it 'looked too much like a contribution to Walt Whitman to tempt to reading'. Even in *England's Ideal* Harney discovered 'some nonsense' such as the praise of Thoreau and his gospel of 'Simplification of Life':

He [Thoreau] had no wife, no children to provide for, and he repudiated civic and social obligations and duties. I am not blaming him nor would I think of blaming Mr. Carpenter if following the like course, as perhaps in a measure he does. But Thoreau cannot be held up as an exemplar. . . . Thoreau would have found it just as impossible to build his hut on Boston Common. In fact, our Hyde Park is much freer than Boston Common.²¹

Clearly Harney was incapable of distinguishing between a political mass demonstration, Chartist or otherwise, and a criticism of the existing order of society latent in an individual attempt to 'return to nature'. 'What is to be done to old Chartists when they turn philistine?' wrote Henry Salt to Carpenter.²²

Carpenter did nothing about it. Perhaps he could now afford to ignore the obloquy. His contact with the East deepened his concept of spiritual democracy and widened his understanding of civilisation.

We are a menace to you, O civilisation!
We have seen you – we allow you – we bear with you for a time,
But beware! for in a moment and, when the hour comes, inevitably,
We shall arise and sweep you away!²³

TEN HUMANITARIANISM AND LARGER SOCIALISM

HENRY SALT pointed out that Carpenter placed man and humanity in the centre of the universe as 'the sole clue to the unravelling of the labyrinthine secret of life',¹ and sought to claim him as a leading spirit in the movement he himself was about to start under the banner of humanitarianism. It was a movement to protest against 'the numerous barbarisms of civilisation – the cruelties inflicted by men on men, in the name of law, authority, and traditional habit, and the still more atrocious ill-treatment of the so-called lower animals'.² Salt's advocacy of the rights of animals was certainly an extension of the utilitarian calculus of pleasure and pain, but it was also part of the immediate approach to the question of regaining the unity of man and nature or the mystical identity with the universe, and Carpenter, especially after his journey to the East, was quite prepared to help him in his new campaign.

Salt and his wife had for some years been known to him through their common interest in the simple life, and they were now among his closest friends. Henry, a graduate of King's College, Cambridge, became an assistant master at Eton in 1875 and married Kate or Catherine Leigh Joynes, sister of a fellow master at Eton, J. L. Joynes, a close friend of his from his Cambridge days. Joynes accompanied Henry George on his speaking tour in Ireland and with him was arrested by the Irish Constabulary: he lost his job at Eton when he published an account of his Irish adventures. He joined Hyndman's SDF, and did much hard work until the split at the end of 1884.

Salt, while at Eton, became familiar with Carpenter's writings advocating a wiser and more natural mode of life which 'amid such surroundings' provoked 'a peculiarly vivid interest',³ and it was indeed through Carpenter, as he recalled, that he became acquainted with Thoreau's *Walden*, and was induced to give up his position at Eton and adopt 'a simpler and more independent style of life'.⁴ He resigned his mastership in 1884 when, according to Bernard Shaw, he became convinced that the Eton masters 'were but cannibals in cap and gown'.⁵

The Salts then moved to a cottage at Tilford, Surrey, where they grew their own vegetables and flowers. Here Carpenter, the foremost advocate of the return to nature, was naturally welcomed as 'the tutelary deity of the place', while Bernard Shaw, another frequenter, was 'the *advocatus diaboli*, whose professed hatred of the country gave an additional zest to his appearances there', wrote Salt.⁶

Carpenter and Kate shared other interests as well. He found in Kate such an accomplished pianist that to play duets with her was a sheer joy. And Kate was apparently a homosexual herself. Bernard Shaw wrote that she refused to consummate her marriage with Salt, calling herself an Urning, an idea she got from Carpenter.⁷ She later wrote to Carpenter, regretting that by marrying Salt she had chained him so long and had tormented him so much.⁸ The Salts visited Millthorpe for the first time in 1890. Kate found it 'heaven itself complete with a divinity'. Henry thought otherwise, and regarded it as 'a blot on the landscape'.⁹ Henry also wrote a witty poem on Carpenter who sat 'calm, 'neath summer skies, on Adam's Peak in Adam's guise'.¹⁰

Salt had lectured to the Fabian Society on the need for a Humanitarian League in order to give form and direction to humane feelings in the public mind. The Fabian response was not encouraging, but he went ahead with his plans, and in the spring of 1891 when Carpenter returned from his Eastern pilgrimage, Salt consulted him about the setting up of the League. 'They [Henry and Kate] are great lovers of animals, & Salt has lately started a Humanitarian League. . . They are very simple people - almost too much to run a "League"!' wrote Carpenter to Oates.¹¹ He did not attend the inaugural meeting, but promised his support, as did Bernard Shaw

and one or two other Fabians and some old Etonians. In *Seed-time*, the organ of the New Fellowship, Salt defended the League against the possible charge of sentimentality or crankiness. The object of the League, he declared, was to approach the whole question of humanitarianism from the one principle that 'it is iniquitous to inflict suffering on any sentient being, except when self-defence or absolute necessity can be justly pleaded', and he quoted Wordsworth for an illustration of this aim:

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.¹²

Early in 1893 Carpenter gave a paper on 'Vivisection' for the League. He believed that drugs and specifics, which modern medical science developed by inflicting pain on dumb animals, would not diminish human suffering and would even increase it by setting up new diseases of their own. Moreover, in the case of an epidemic disease 'the evil is more social than individual. We are fully aware that the disease can only spread under bad social conditions'. The current method of inoculation, he maintained, would even encourage insanitary habits in our social life, and he almost believed that vaccination was responsible not only for 'horrible and fatal sores and diseases immediately after' but also for the spread of infantile syphilis and other dreaded cases of contagious diseases. 'The general practice of medicine', he now declared, 'is thoroughly *infidel* in character'.¹³ His arguments against vivisection, however, were not merely utilitarian or sanitarian. One of his papers on the subject was read by his brother Alfred at an anti-vivisection meeting which he was unable to attend, and when Alfred came to a passage in the paper about 'the body behind the body, which eludes the vivisection', the audience 'cheered like mad'.¹⁴ It was a simple, forceful argument based on his concept of mystical or spiritual democracy.

In an article he wrote for the *Clarion*, Robert Blatchford's popular Socialist paper, Carpenter sought to link the issue with the working-class movement in a joint protest against 'the horrible exploitations of so-called Science'. 'Does it not look, comrades', he bluntly asked, 'very much as if the professors were not only experimenting on the animals, but experimenting on us?'¹⁵ The Humanitarian League prepared a memorial, 'Democratic Protest against Vivisection',

which was signed by almost all the prominent Socialists and trade union leaders; the conspicuous absentees were Hyndman and the Webbs, believers in science and progress.

Carpenter also advocated the establishment of animal sanctuaries in a 'charming' lecture many years later,¹⁶ and translated an article by Elisée Reclus, the French geographer and Anarchist, entitled 'The Great Kinship', the concluding paragraph of which well accorded with his own views: 'The study of primitive man has contributed in a singular degree to our understanding of the "law and order" man of our own day; the customs of animals will help us to penetrate deeper into the science of life, will enlarge both our knowledge of the world and our love'.¹⁷

The activities of the Humanitarian League soon expanded, and a National Humanitarian Conference was held in London in 1895, calling for prison reform, public control of the hospitals, the establishment of municipal slaughterhouses 'conducted on scientific principles', and the abolition of cruel sports such as rabbit coursing, pigeon shooting and the hunting of tame stags.¹⁸ Carpenter supported the League whenever possible, and in November 1897 he gave an address on 'Prison Methods' at a public meeting held at Essex Hall under the auspices of the Criminal Law and Prisons Department of the League. He stressed the fact that nine-tenths of the convictions passed at that time were for offences against property, and said: 'We breed in our slums human beings by the thousand who having neither manual nor mental abilities, must necessarily obtain Property by illegitimate means. The slum is the vestibule of the prison. Society can hardly assume to punish the thief, unless it offers him the alternative of honest industrial employment.' Hence he advocated 'the transformation of our prisons into industrial centres'.¹⁹

Next he turned his attention to the question of capital punishment, and took up the case of Mary Ansell, a girl of twenty-two, who was executed for murdering her imbecile sister. It was a pathetic case: Mary gave her sister a jam sandwich with some phosphorous paste smeared on it, to obtain the paltry sum of £22 for which she had previously insured her victim. In this case, remarked Carpenter, there was no question of danger to the State but only brutality by the State. Moreover, the State failed to see that 'the poor diseased brains, both of Mary and her victim, were the products in all probability of its

own vile greed in factory and slum, working all through our social conditions and condemning half the children of our cities beforehand to ill-health and ignorance'. Therefore the only course open to any self-respecting nation was to abolish the death penalty. The only rational object of punishment, he added, was reform, not revenge.²⁰

He later recaptured all these points in a book entitled *Prisons, Police and Punishment*. The prison was 'an epitome of folly and wickedness'. In it, he said, 'the state is seen, like an evil stepmother, beating its own children, whom it has reared in poverty and ignorance, and among conditions which must inevitably lead to crime. . . . And on the Scaffold. . . it completes its programme'. He also condemned the police force, the chief object of which, he believed, was 'the protection of the wealthy classes'. Hence arose 'the comic sight . . . of the scores of huge constables prowling round the mansions of the wealthy' in the West End, while the supposedly crime-ridden East End was 'left almost deserted by the champions of order'. Naturally he sought his remedies 'in a Socialist direction', and declared that the prisons 'are, or ought to be, practically continuous with the workhouses and casual wards', because 'they deal, for the most part, with the same problems - of poverty, debility, idleness, outcast and desperate life - only in their more acute form'.²¹ His speculation finally led him to an Anarchist utopia, to an analysis of the possibility of a free, spontaneous society as against the existing society of coercions. This aspect of his interest, however, will be examined more closely in chapter 14 which deals with Syndicalism.

We now return to the story of the Fellowship of the New Life or the New Fellowship as it was called, which renewed its activities with the publication of its monthly organ *Seed-time* in 1889.²² Its secretary at the time was Edith Lees, a former school mistress who had some experience of social work in the London slums. Alfred Carpenter, Edward's brother, Commander, DSO, RN, who married the sister of Sydney Olivier of the Fabian Society, became its treasurer. Miss Lees, who married Havelock Ellis in December 1891, was succeeded in her secretaryship by J. Ramsay MacDonald who together with Miss Lees and several others had ventured a short-lived co-operative household of Fellowship members in Bloomsbury. According to the new secretary, the New Fellowship desired to

'emphasise the ethical factor in social evolution' and aimed at 'a reform of the ideals of individuals'.²³

It promoted the founding of new schools and educational communities, and a project was mooted to start one within easy reach of Millthorpe. Dr Cecil Reddie, an educationalist, and Bob Muirhead were among its sponsors, and the school was opened in a mansion house called Abbotsholme – shortened from its original name 'Abbot's Clownholme' – on the banks of the Dove near Rochester in Staffordshire, actually on the edge of the Derbyshire Moor.²⁴ Ashbee and Lowes Dickinson were to help as 'visitors'; so was Carpenter himself. But owing to differences as to the conduct of the school, the partnership was dissolved and Muirhead withdrew;²⁵ Carpenter's interest in it also declined.

To the members of the New Fellowship and the humanitarians Carpenter remained the foremost advocate of the return to nature, 'a gospel of salvation by sandals and sunbaths', and these remained the symbols of what he called 'a return to the more primitive, indispensable, and universal part of oneself'.²⁶ He was indignant when W. A. Macdonald, a dress reformer, was excluded from the British Museum Reading Room because he went there in sandals. 'I shall certainly take an early opportunity of visiting the Reading Room in my largest and most conspicuous sandals, and I hope other friends will do likewise'.²⁷ This was the nearest he came to advocating direct action, though history does not record how far he prosecuted his threat.

His humanitarianism and naturalism were not to replace his Socialism but rather to bolster it up on many fronts of his campaign to overcome civilisation. And his Socialism was now given a reappraisal in the light of new experiences and new interests. At a time when the enthusiasm and energy stirred up by the organisation of unskilled labour were channelled into the movement for an independent labour party, Carpenter began to call his own brand of Socialism – 'larger' Socialism. It was certainly non-sectarian, but it was not hostile to any of the existing sects. Indeed, it was nothing but a faith in the labour movement taken as a whole.

In November 1892 Ton Maguire wrote from Leeds, announcing the birth of an Independent Labour Party (ILP) there:

You will find in your travels that this new party lifts its head all over the North. It has caught the people as I imagine the Chartist movement did. And it is of the people – such will be the secret of its success. Everywhere its bent is Socialist because Socialists are the only people who have a message for it.²⁸

In the last two months of that year Carpenter assisted the independent labour movement with an extensive speaking tour in Lancashire and Yorkshire on behalf of various local bodies, Manchester Labour Church, Bolton ILP, Bradford Labour Church, Halifax Labour Union, Sheffield Fabians and one or two others. He spoke on the ‘Breakdown of Industrial System’ and its future: he now saw in trade unions the main prop for the future co-operative system, while the emergence of independent labour parties impressed him largely on account of the local autonomy to be achieved through them and of the Socialist propaganda to be carried out by them.²⁹

The inaugural conference of the national Independent Labour Party was held at Bradford on 13 and 14 January 1893. Unlike Keir Hardie, the chairman of the conference, who wanted to boss the new party, or Aveling, another ambitious delegate representing a small Socialist body in London who sought to manoeuvre the nascent ILP into close contact with the continental Marxists, Carpenter, in spite of his devoted work for local ILPs before the conference, shunned the limelight of their national leadership and concentrated as ever on local work as a missionary of Socialism.

In February he visited Scotland and spoke at Beith and Paisley. At a meeting held at the Glasgow City Hall on 13 February, he dealt with the problem of ‘Parties in the Labor Movement’ or what he later called ‘larger’ Socialism. He was not sorry to see so many parties and sects, ‘Trade Unions, Co-ops, Land Nationalisers, Henry Georgites, Socialists (State, Fabian, Christian, SDF), Anarchists, Utopians & Home Colonisers, ILP’, for this was a ‘sign of life’. All these agreed on two points, namely ‘to carry on the life of the People, by & for the People’ and ‘to render Labor *free, pleasant & useful*’. Indeed, he now advocated the ‘usefulness of the parties’. The ILP especially, as it came late in the movement, had the advantage of learning from various teachings: ‘Hope it will keep broad.’ He himself had not much faith in Parliament, but he wished to see a hundred Labour members. ‘Landlords Parliaments have done their work; a

Labour Parliament might do its.³⁰ Carpenter, as we have seen, had been criticised for this catholicity or opportunism by Creaghe. 'I believe you & I are the only two who work with all the factions', he wrote to Glasier.³¹

From Scotland Carpenter hurried back to Sheffield and to Dore where James Brown was ill and sinking rapidly. After his death which came shortly afterwards, Carpenter edited some of Brown's poems and published them as a pamphlet. 'Most of his verses', wrote Carpenter, 'were inspired – as will be recognised by those who knew him best – by that spirit of attached comradeship which is so marked and important a feature of the Labor movement to day.'³²

It was only to be expected that Carpenter paid serious attention to the problem of democracy within the labour movement. He was disgusted with a front page cartoon in the *Labour Leader*, edited by Keir Hardie, which was captioned 'John Burns says "There is such a thing as too much *Independence*".' It caricatured John Burns MP as a four-footed ox-like figure, chained to the leader of the Liberal Party, Lord Rosebery, who held a sceptre of 'office promises'.³³ Carpenter at once wrote Keir Hardie:

I'm really sorry to see the Cartoon in last week's Labour Leader about Burns. You know I think a good many of the cartoons before this one have been unworthy of the Labor Cause – spiteful & petty & coarse – but this last beats them all. I know you, dear H., are so well fitted to hold up a higher standard of Labor policy – something generous & large-minded & calm – that I do think it a pity to condescend to the common scurrilities of the Capitalist press. Leave the Carrion to the Carrion. The greater trouble in the labor movement is the petty jealousies of 'Labor leaders' – for God's sake do not foment these.

After all, Burns's criticism of the ILP – if perhaps unnecessary or possibly impolitic – was fair in its way, & I think myself had some good points in it; and of course any counter criticism of the same character might be right enough; but really to condescend to such odious lampoons as this cartoon is simply to make all enemies of the Labor Cause rejoice.³⁴

Hardie's reaction is not known, but most certainly was not of the kind calculated to satisfy his critic.

Carpenter, in his *Clarion* article on party democracy, objected to what he called 'the "dancing doll" delegate theory', according to which a constituency should hold the string to manipulate its dele-

gates. Democracy, he said, was not to annihilate the individual, 'even though he be an official'. He ought to be 'guiding' as well as 'guided'.

And heart-in-heart. A larger heart we want towards each other all through the Labour movement. Such a big thing it is – and is going to be – such innumerable work to be done, of all sorts and kinds. Burns at his kind, Keir Hardie at his, Nunquam [Blatchford] at another, Morris or Kropotkin at another, and the unknown equally important workers each at theirs. Criticise each other's work by all means, but don't make the mistake of thinking that because the other man is working at a different part of the *same building* from you that therefore he is working in opposition to you. . . The cause is greater than we sometimes would make it.³⁵

The more divided and even ungenerous the movement became, the more stress did Carpenter put on the need for 'large-minded' Socialism, which was practically the substance of his philosophy.

Tom Mann, the secretary of the ILP, consulted Carpenter about his plan to edit a volume of essays on Socialism, and their deliberation led to the publication in 1897 of a book entitled *Forecasts of the Coming Century*, edited not by Mann but by Carpenter himself. The essays were by Alfred Russell Wallace, Tom Mann, H. Russell Smart, William Morris (a reprint of his 1891 article on 'The Socialist Ideal in Art' as he had died in 1896), H. S. Salt, Enid Stacy, Margaret McMillan, Grant Allen, Bernard Shaw and Carpenter himself. Shaw, while rushing 'from the thick of Bayreuth into the thick of this confounded Congress' of the Second International held in London in the summer of 1896, promised to send an article, 'a pure sermon & nothing else'.³⁶

Tom Mann's contribution is of some interest especially in view of his later evolution as a Syndicalist, for he regarded trade unions as the most powerful agency 'for the development of the necessary opinion and general fitness' for Socialisation, and above all emphasised 'Democratic ownership and control' in industry. Shaw's 'sermon' was perhaps more forceful. He probably had Carpenter in his mind when he wrote that 'Socialism, if it is to gain serious attention nowadays, must come into the field as political science and not as sentimental dogma.' He pursued a Baconian criticism of the fallacies of Socialist metaphysics, and especially found fault with what he

called 'the dramatic illusion', or 'religious illusion' of Socialism, obviously directing his attack at Hyndman and other SDF leaders whose absence in this book was conspicuous. 'Socialism will come', Shaw went on, 'by prosaic instalments of public regulation and public administration enacted by ordinary parliaments, vestries, municipalities, parish councils, school boards, and the like'. With this Carpenter would certainly have agreed, but Shaw was more militant and trenchant in his style, and ridiculed 'the cherished illusion that all Socialists are agreed in principle though they may differ as to tactics'. 'The Calvinistic Socialist' and the Fabian Socialist were irreconcilable on principle. Up to a certain point, illusion was useful and even indispensable, but 'beyond that point it gives more trouble than it is worth: in Jevonian language, its utility becomes disutility'. Hence arose Shaw's fundamental distrust not only of Hyndman but also of Carpenter.

The final article, 'Transitions to Freedom', was written by Carpenter, who insisted, in spite of Shaw's criticism, that nearly all the Socialists would agree on the general course of stages of development of modern Society. They only differed in the importance they attached to these stages: Kropotkin dreamed of a quick passage to his Anarchist ideal, while Hyndman expected a long, laborious work under collectivism. Carpenter believed that Socialism in the future 'will be broad enough and large enough to include an immense diversity of institutions and habits as well as a considerable survival of the social forms of today'.³⁷ Certainly this was 'large enough' Socialism, as large as his own spirit. If it was ethical, it was so only in so far as it was related to the ethical overtone of the New Fellowship. It was not the Socialism of moral reform but a Socialism which found its basis in Carpenter's own philosophy of unity of man and the universe.

Moreover, his summary of 'Forecasts' was the swan song of his own Socialism in so far as it sought an organisational basis in the movement. Tom Mann soon departed for Australia, leaving the ILP in the hands of Keir Hardie and his new associates who were intent on making their body more successful in Parliament. Even Bruce Glasier, one of those who joined the national administrative council of the ILP at the time and one who shared much of Carpenter's views, fought very hard against 'the cry and craving for unity' with

Hyndman's SDF, a united front that would jeopardise the ILP's chance in electoral politics. It was in fact inevitable that Carpenter had no organisational link with any of the existing parties, for his Socialism, which indeed stood for unity and fellowship, now meant the movement as a whole, and not a part of it.

ELEVEN THE SUBLIMATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

EDWARD CARPENTER was a bundle of human affections; a long span of life full of longings and desires was behind him, sometimes morbidly self-indulgent, but it was on the whole calm, unselfish, and helpful to others like 'a signpost that simply stands and points' as Mrs Salt once said.¹ His interest in Socialism and naturalism, as has been pointed out, were intensely personal, and as such they were a reflection of his affectional life which was bluntly and unashamedly homosexual. As time went on, his passions were largely satisfied by arrangements congenial to his nature – this in spite of the growing hostility of the outside world towards male homosexuality. Under these circumstances it is not very surprising that he should have been drawn into a study of sex, in its homosexual aspects above all, to proclaim the world of sexual love as the very basis not only of human survival but also of human unity and equality.

In fact he came to believe that sex was the paramount issue of civilisation. Robert Blatchford thought otherwise: fascinated though he was by Carpenter's *Civilisation*, he objected to a Socialist taking up the study of sex. 'I was a week in Halifax', he wrote to Carpenter:

– snowed up – and now am back among the burst pipes – flooded out. Good old Civilization. . . The book you sent me on naked people is a – well, I dont think I ever *did*. Did you? I wonder how the author would have 'negotiated' last week in Halifax! Six inches of snow, a hard frost, and a North-easterly blizzard. And we are to be as black as cherries, and

all over hair. Hum! and *no* dress. I am a radical; but – ! And the thing: I don't go with Walt Whitman and this German 'original' in their ideas as to the sexual parts. There is a great deal of prudery – or prurience – I admit, and room for reform; but – ! I will just give you an idea of my own position on this subject.

1: I think that the reform – or rather reorganization – of the sexual relations must *follow* the economic and industrial change. . . . If the industrial change is retarded the sexual change must be retarded since the latter depends upon and follows the former. . . .

2: I think that the accomplishment of the industrial change will need all our energy and will consume all the years we are likely to live. Do you agree? If so, if Socialism is not established during our lives, or only at the end of our lives, and if a state of Socialism must necessarily precede the change in the sexual relations, it follows that the sexual change will not concern us personally; but only concern the next generation. . . . In short, I think the time is not ripe for Socialists, *as* Socialists, to meddle with the sexual question.²

Here Blatchford sounded like an exponent of the driest formula of economic determinism. Perhaps he was right after all, and Carpenter's messages of sexual liberation were to have hold only on the future generations who would be better situated industrially or economically. 'But of course', Blatchford added, 'I may be entirely mistaken. Even if I am right that is no reason why you should not write a book upon a subject which you have studied, and in which you are interested. Besides you know a lot more about such things than I do.'

Carpenter agreed that 'next to hunger' sex was 'the most primitive and imperative of our needs', yet it entered into consciousness even more than the former, for 'the hunger needs of the human race are in the later societies fairly well satisfied, but the sex-desires are strongly restrained, both by law and custom, from satisfaction – and so assert themselves all the more in thought'.³ Carpenter may have been a little too optimistic about our 'hunger needs', but this was the kind of argument with which he could justify his study despite Blatchford's objection that it was premature.

In fact, Carpenter's Socialism itself had little to do with the politics of hunger, and was prompted by his concern with the alienation of the middle class, the most striking symptom of which was the position of women: 'the state of enforced celibacy in which vast numbers

of women live to-day' was 'a national wrong, almost as grievous as that of prostitution'.⁴ Again the problem of sex was forced upon him as a result of 'Mrs. Grundyism' – the respectability which he regarded as 'the code of the dominant class'. Thus he recounted 'one of the most melancholy sights' he had ever seen, that of the bathers in Endcliffe Wood near Sheffield who had to wait for a policeman's signal before they could go into the water: 'They were not allowed to go into the water while the day was yet warm and bright, for fear, I suppose, that some one (possibly a "lady") might see a portion of the naked human form.'⁵ He still had to be cautious in alluding to homosexuality, but his reticence in this respect was soon to be broken by his encounter with J. A. Symonds who had already been engaged in its defence.

John Addington Symonds was four years senior to Carpenter. The son of an eminent Victorian physician, Symonds went to Harrow, and was instrumental in the resignation of the headmaster Dr C. J. Vaughan for sexual irregularities. Symonds himself experienced homosexual relationships while he was at Balliol College, Oxford. He was elected probationary Fellow of Magdalen College there, but his academic future was shattered by a blackmailer threatening to expose his secrets. His health collapsed. Torn between desire and convention, he chose the latter, and married. He had four daughters by his wife, with whom however he finally made a pact to sleep separately so as to avoid any further issue. His declining health compelled him and his family to reside at Davos, Switzerland. Thence he established a considerable fame as a writer on history, art and literature, and was also free to satisfy his homosexual urges among the Swiss peasants or with a gondolier when he visited Venice. Yet he was very much attached to his daughters, and the death of the eldest at the age of twenty-one touched him profoundly. He had written an apologia for homosexuality in *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883) and also in *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), both privately printed. It was with such a complex man that Carpenter came into contact early in 1892.⁶

Whitman's last illness provided an occasion for Carpenter to write to Symonds as he had been asked to pass a circular letter from Horace Traubel on to other English admirers of Whitman. Symonds was his

senior even as a student of *Leaves of Grass*. Carpenter now sent to Davos a copy of the new edition of his *Towards Democracy*, and Symonds welcomed this as 'the most important contribution which has as yet been made to the diffusion of Whitman's philosophy of life'.⁷

In the summer of 1892, Symonds visited England, accompanied by a 'magnificent Venetian gondolier and manservant', and briefly met Carpenter, probably at Brighton. By this time Symonds had made an agreement with Havelock Ellis to collaborate in a full-scale work on sexual inversion: Ellis to write on the medical and psychological aspects of the problem, and Symonds on the literary and historical. Symonds, who felt very keenly about the inhuman nature of the Labouchere amendment against male homosexuals, was anxious to expand his study by assembling his case-histories as Dr R. von Krafft-Ebing of Vienna had done before him, so as to free public opinion from 'the outdated theories of obscurantist medical men'.⁸ There were, however, signs of disagreement between the two collaborators, for Symonds regarded homosexuality as natural and having positive qualities as in the case of male lovers in Ancient Greece, while Ellis, not a homosexual himself, took the view that it was a psychological anomaly and even neurosis. Although Symonds stayed in England nine weeks in the summer, his poor health compelled him to return to Davos without seeing Ellis.

In December of the same year, Ellis wrote to Carpenter about his intention to collaborate with Symonds, asking for personal information, and assured him that every care would be taken not to disclose its origins.⁹ Shortly after this, Carpenter wrote to Symonds about Ellis's inquiry and his own observations on some of the problems involved. These can be reconstructed to some extent at least from Symonds's own reply: 'I am so glad that H. Ellis had told you about our project. I never saw him. But I like his way of corresponding on this subject. And I need somebody of medical importance to collaborate with. Alone, I could make but little effect - the effect of an eccentric.' Symonds said that he and Ellis agreed upon basic points, the only difference being that Ellis was 'too much inclined to stick to the neuropathical theory of explanation'. 'But', he said, 'I am whittling that away to a minimum'. He himself would introduce the whole problem of Greek love into the book. He then went

on to deal with the question raised by Carpenter, 'a very interesting question with regard to physiological grounds for this passion'. 'I have no doubt', he said, 'that the absorption of semen implies a real modification of the physique of the person who absorbs it, & that, in these homosexual relations, this constitutes an important basis for subsequent conditions – both spiritual & corporeal.' 'It is a pity', he added, 'that we cannot write freely on the topic'; he regretted that the problem of sex had been grossly but 'accountably' neglected:

Its physiological & psychological relations even in the connection between man & woman are not understood. We have no theory which is worth anything upon the differentiation of the sexes, to begin with. In fact, a science of what is the central function of human beings remains to be sought. This, I take it, is very much due to physiologists assuming that sexual instincts follow the build of the sexual organs; & that when they do not, the phenomenon is criminal or morbid. In fact, it is due to science at this point being still clogged with religious & legal presuppositions.

'The sound method of induction' should be applied to a study of homosexual passions, but 'the first thing is to force people to see that the passions in question have their justification in nature'. And he hoped that

eventually a new chivalry, i.e., a second elevated form of human love, will emerge & take its place for the service of mankind by the side of that other which was wrought out in the Middle Ages. It will be complementary, by no means prejudicial to the elder & more commonly acceptable. It will engage a different type of individual in different sphere of energy – aims answering to those of monastic labour in common or of military self-devotion to duty taking here the place of domestic care & procreative utility.¹⁰

Symonds also sent a copy of his latest work to Carpenter, the beautifully bound edition of his collection of essays, *In the Key of the Blue*, which contained a chapter entitled 'The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love'. 'Chivalrous love of both types, the Greek and the mediaeval, existed independently of the marriage tie and free from sensual affections', reads one passage: 'It was, in each case, the source of exhilarating passion; a durable ecstasy which removed the lover to a higher region, rendering him capable of haughty thoughts and valiant deeds.'¹¹ This enhanced ideal of Greek

love was what Carpenter had been seeking in his own life, and he must have had no difficulty in endorsing most of the arguments used by Symonds.

Carpenter, for his part, sent a copy of his book, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, to Davos, and Mrs Symonds read it aloud to her husband. 'We both of us are quite enthusiastic about its style & its feeling', wrote Symonds.¹² It appears that Carpenter also divulged his reservations about Ellis, who after all revered cold reason and whom he later described as 'thoughtful, preoccupied, bookish, deliberate'.¹³ 'Thank you for yours of the 17th', wrote Symonds in his following letter: 'What you say about H. Ellis in conversation is just what R. Noel told me. . . . When you make notes on those matters for us, will you send them to me? Of course H.E. will see the bulk of them. But you might feel it more appropriate to let me have things which you would not care to submit to him.' In this letter Symonds touched upon the social aspect of his idealised homosexual love:

The blending of Social Strata in masculine love seems to me one of its most pronounced, & socially hopeful, features. Where it appears, it abolishes class distinctions, & opens by a single operation the cataract-blinded eye to their futilities. . . . If it could be acknowledged & extended, it would do very much to further the advent of the right sort of Socialism.

Then Symonds gave an account of his own happy relations with the Swiss people around him. Such manly love, he insisted, 'does not interfere with marriage, when that is sought as a domestic institution, as it always is among men who want children for helpers in their work & women to keep their households'.¹⁴ Symond's views of marriage and women were, to say the least, conventional, and probably appropriate in a male-dominated society, perhaps so in a male-homosexual world as well, but those were certainly not Carpenter's.¹⁵

When Carpenter's notes on his and his friends' homosexual cases reached Davos, they secured a friendly reception. 'Your notes are very interesting & valuable', wrote Symonds:

Percy's love-letter is quite charming, & the silhouette of the Sheffield show-boy delightful. What the guardsman said to your friend accords with what I know about military prostitution. . . . Referring to what you

stated as to Case H, the only boy among 6 sisters, I have wondered whether cases of this sort do not support Ulrichs' physiological hypothesis: as though the combination of the parents tended to female sexuality in the differentiation of the offspring, so that when a male came he was feminine in temperament. . . . Apropos of your friend the engine driver - I must tell you how much I admire that passage in 'Towards Democracy' (pp. 140-143).¹⁶

The last reference was to a poem called 'In the Drawing Rooms', in which Carpenter, weary of the barren life of the middle-class drawingroom, envisaged 'the grimy and oil-besmeared figure of a stoker' on the train, who had 'the quiet look, the straight untroubled unseeking eyes, resting upon me - giving me without any ado the thing I needed'.¹⁷

Early in March 1893 Symonds conveyed his wish to see Carpenter before he began his book on sexual inversion, and invited him to come in May to Venice where Symonds had a little house. 'In April I want to be in Rome'. But in April he suddenly died in Rome, a victim of an influenza epidemic there. By his side was his daughter Margaret who had accompanied him on his last Italian tour; but a big bunch of purple lilacs was placed in his arms by a strong Swiss mountaineer who was there and who, as Margaret wrote, 'loved him for himself'.¹⁸

Probably Carpenter felt that he was fated to succeed Symonds in the defence of homosexuality, but there was no question of his collaborating with Ellis. Ellis, for his part, did not ask him to do so, for he was relieved, as he later confessed, by the termination of his partnership with Symonds, as he feared that the significance of his book on sexual inversion would be greatly discounted by the fact that his collaborator was a homosexual.¹⁹

Nevertheless, Carpenter assisted Ellis as much as he could, giving him the latest information he had on the continental works on the subject, and also supplying him with some more homosexual cases that he had personally observed. We have already seen that Carpenter's own case was published in Ellis's book, which is indeed a key to the understanding of his emotional life in its formative period. Unlike Ellis, he could not see the problem of sexual inversion with the detached eyes of a doctor. On the other hand, he had already made considerable advances in his own studies, and had written some

manuscript papers on the subject. Edith Ellis, formerly Miss Lees, now the wife of Havelock Ellis, was perhaps more curious and sympathetic: her marriage was a union of equal partners, practising social and economic equality in their joint life, and she was all the more independent from her husband as she was passionately attached to a friend of her own sex. 'When are your sex bombs going to be flung on our waiting heads?' she asked Carpenter.²⁰

In the course of 1894-5 Carpenter managed to publish four pamphlets on sexual matters, all by the Labour Press Society Limited, Manchester. This was a little publishing society for Socialist literature, of which Carpenter himself was one of the committee members and shareholders. They were truly pioneering works, as they came out in the same year as Ellis's *Man and Woman*, and two years before the latter's more solid work on sexual inversion.

The first pamphlet, *Sex-Love, and its Place in a Free Society*, was published early in the year, and Carpenter wrote to Mrs Salt in February: 'The Sex-pamphlet is selling like anything, & a clergyman . . . writes that he is lecturing on it to his parishioners.'²¹ This was not surprising, for the pamphlet contained what the *Clarion* described as 'wholesome and logical argument in favour of a more sensible, natural, and really *chaste* conduct of the relations between the sexes'.²²

His main concern was indeed the sublimation of sex, in other words to enhance what he called the 'Titanic instinctive and subconscious nature' of man, from the stage of illusion that was associated with 'sin' or 'the separation or sundering . . . of one's being' for the pursuit of things external, into 'the real union'. 'The prime object of Sex', he wrote, 'is *union*, the physical union as the allegory and expression of the real union.' In love, he felt, a man identified himself with 'cosmic energies and entities, powers that are preparing the future of the race'. He emphasized the importance of sex education from childhood, and argued that the need for self-control and affection in one's relations with others and dedication to their well-being should also be taught. 'As the sentiment of common life and common interest grows', he felt, 'the importance of the mere sex act will dwindle till it comes to be regarded as only one very specialised factor in the full total of human love.'

His friend Henry Salt had edited an abridged edition of Godwin's *Political Justice* some years before. Godwin dreamed of perfect human society in which procreation was no longer needed, death finally overcome, and men would live for ever as adults. Carpenter would have thought such a society to be dull and lifeless, but he was not very far from the Godwinian ideal, when he criticised the tendency to place too great an emphasis on the 'child-bearing function' of sex, and maintained that 'a kind of generation' was bound to take place in any of those who were in love, 'even without the actual Sex-act'. The subtle bias against procreation crept in, for he was more or less drawn into the Godwinian tradition of repudiating Malthus's theory of population.

Carpenter's 'sex bombs' went on exploding. His second pamphlet, *Woman, and her Place in a Free Society*, began with an epigram which echoed Charles Fourier: 'Woman. What a word is this! In its brief compass what thousand-year-long tragedies lie enshrined!' Earlier in the century Fourier had bitterly criticised what he called 'avilissement des femmes en Civilisation'.²³ Carpenter in a similar vein wrote on the 'degeneration of woman' in 'the periods of Civilisation':

the Man, all through, more and more calmly assuming that it must be her province to live and work for him; tending more and more to shut her from the free world and the following of her own bent, into the seclusion of the boudoir and the harem, or down to the drudgery of the hearth; confining her body, her mind; playing always upon her sex-nature, accentuating always that – as though she was indeed nought else but sex; . . . and granting her more and more but one choice in life – to be a free woman, and to die, unsexed, in the gutter; or for creature-comforts and a good name to sell herself, soul and body, into life-long bondage to a lord whom too soon, alas! she might come to hate.²⁴

He argued, however, that the 'liberation' of woman would not be achieved until 'our whole commercial system, with its barter and sale of human labor and human love for gain, is done away', and this observation led him to assert that the women's cause was also 'the cause of the oppressed laborer over the whole earth'. He welcomed 'healthy signs of revolt on the part of some of the lady class'; the 'household drudge' would be emancipated only by the spread of the gospel of simplification of life which meant economy in household

labour, and by Socialism with 'a drift towards the amalgamation of households'. Yet it was the prostitute who would herald the new world of love. The ideal free woman in the future, he believed, would arise from the basis of 'her complete freedom as to the disposal of her sex', and from the conviction that woman 'will on the whole use that freedom rationally and well'. With her freedom thus attained, her great function of motherhood would truly be appreciated. Carpenter admitted the congenital or organic differences of man and woman, believing that the female was more the conservator of the race than the male. Yet woman being equal to man would become his comrade 'fully equipped to meet him, and to engage alongside of him in labors at least equal in importance to his'. Indeed, it would be a comradeship in a life's battle like the one between 'the two men-friends or two women-friends'.

In writing on woman, Carpenter was apparently helped by his friendship with such notable personalities as Olive Schreiner, Mrs Ellis and Mrs Salt, and also of course by his long association with his own sisters, some of whom were still unmarried. He knew several working-class women among the Sheffield Socialists. Even so, it is astonishing that Carpenter, a homosexual, should have been able to show so much understanding of the other sex. Perhaps this was so because he himself shared some of the feminine characteristics of 'Case H', the only boy among six sisters.

Carpenter confessed that in his paper on 'Marriage' he had to take the 'conciliatory' attitude because of the 'undoubted difficulty of proposing any definitive alternative (like terminable contracts, &c.)'. 'The more one abuses the Philistine, the more is one bound to show him "a better way"', he wrote to Mrs Salt:

- and the truth is that no definite changes can be proposed which do not bring some evils with them. I wish you would just think over this question of 'contracts'. (I don't at all agree with you that a contract for one year is as bad as for a lifetime -but then you are such a restless 'bird of freedom' - it is just like you to say that!) The subject anyhow is a difficult one. Nothing short of perfect freedom can really satisfy, & that must assume love-capabilities such as rarely exist at present.²⁵

He wished to be practical, and he had not much to offer in the way of a practical proposal. Thus his *Marriage* pamphlet was the dullest of the four papers that were published at this time. Lacking

real knowledge of the matter, he caricatured the married relationship. He expatiated on what he called 'an amalgamated personality' below which the monogamic marriage sanctioned by Church and State fell very short. But as for the modification of the law of marriage and divorce, he merely hinted that marriage-contracts should become matters of private arrangement, and that the only ground for state interference should be the rearing of children. Olive Schreiner, who had been back in South Africa and only a few months before had announced her marriage to a farmer from Transvaal, thought that Carpenter did not deal adequately with 'the monetary independence of woman'. Unlike any two friends of the same sex, she wrote, 'a man & a woman stand in the same relation to each other as a white-man & a black-man', and economic inequality would make their true friendship impossible. As for herself, 'we pay half & half every month when we make up accounts'.²⁶

Nothing serious had happened as yet in his quiet campaign to enlighten the public opinion on the matter of sex. When, however, he published the fourth pamphlet on *Homogenic Love, and its Place in a Free Society* early in 1895, it was quite another story. First of all, it had to be published only for private circulation. Like J. A. Symonds's earlier studies of Greek and Renaissance arts, his treatment of the 'comradely' love was mainly literary and historical, though he rather hesitantly went into its physical side:

Without denying that sexual intimacies do exist; and while freely admitting that, in great cities, there are to be found associated with this form of attachment prostitution and other evils comparable with the evils associated with the ordinary sex-attachment; we may yet say that it would be a great error to suppose that the homogenic love takes as a rule the extreme form vulgarly supposed; and that it would also be a great error to overlook the fact that in a large number of instances the relation is not distinctively sexual at all, though it may be said to be physical in the sense of embrace and endearment.²⁷

Carpenter did not regard sexual inversion as environmental but as 'instinctive and congenital, mentally and physically, and therefore twined in the very roots of individual life and practically ineradicable'. 'Urnings',²⁸ as he called men and women with an innate homosexual bias, were not to be confused with 'that class of persons . . . who out of mere carnal curiosity or extravagance of desire, or

from the dearth of opportunities for a more normal satisfaction (as in schools, barracks, etc.) adopt some homosexual practices'. The latter certainly presented moral as well as environmental issues, but Carpenter was concerned only with homosexuals of the former class. Thus he disagreed with Krafft-Ebing who associated homosexuality with neurosis, or with A. Moll who still clung to a pathological analysis. Less explicitly he criticised Ellis who regarded it as abnormal. Carpenter defended homosexuals as normal and healthy, 'sufficiently so in fact to constitute this [homosexuality] a *distinct variety of the sexual passion*'.

In his attempt to vindicate this particular form of sex-love, he again criticised the traditional view of love as related to procreation. It was perhaps understandable in the old days, he said, when the multiplication of the tribe was one of the very first duties of its members, but 'nowadays when the need has swung round all the other way it is not unreasonable to suppose that a similar revolution will take place in people's views of the place and purpose of the non-child bearing love'.²⁹ It was indeed nothing but a form of neo-Malthusianism.

Carpenter also touched upon the social and ethical aspect of this love, for he believed it had its special function 'in social and heroic work, and in the generation not of bodily children – but of those children of the mind, the philosophical conceptions and ideals which transform our lives and those of society'. Harmodius could not or would not have slain the tyrant Hipparchus if his love had been for a wife and children, instead of for his comrade Aristogeiton. A family life is perhaps incompatible with heroism, and Carpenter was apparently in a heroic mood when he wrote this. He was out to slay the tyrant, if not the tyrant capitalism, at least the Labouchere Amendment of 1885 which was 'unjustifiable, and will no doubt have to be altered'.

It was unfortunate that the pioneering works of Carpenter and of Ellis were overshadowed by the trial of Oscar Wilde which took place in the spring of 1895. It attracted wide attention because of the disclosure of Wilde's relationship with the son of the Marquess of Queensberry, against whom he had launched an action for criminal libel. He lost his case, was himself tried and sentenced to two years'

hard labour, and also declared bankrupt. Soon after the trial, Carpenter wrote an article for *Freedom*, dealing with recent criminal cases including that of Oscar Wilde, and calling attention to the wide-spread practice of blackmail for which the law was responsible.³⁰

Carpenter sent a copy of his *Homogenic Love* to W. T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*. Stead took a great interest in the subject and deplored the 'preposterous severity' of the law, but he could do nothing with the pamphlet.³¹ Meanwhile, the *Humanitarian* sent back his 'Unknown People', a paper which he had prepared to enlighten those who were not familiar with the problems of 'Urnings'. And Fisher Unwin, the publisher of the third edition of his *Towards Democracy*, now wanted to wash his hands of all Carpenter's works. 'So you see', Carpenter told Hukin, "'boycott" has set in already.'³² After further unsuccessful approaches to other publishers, his new 'sex volume' was published by the Labour Press of Manchester under the title of *Love's Coming of Age* in 1896. It was no more than his three 1894 pamphlets put together, and the offending piece *Homogenic Love* was discreetly left out.

Ellis did not fare better with his and Symonds's study of sexual inversion which had to be published first in German translation in 1896. By then Horatio Brown, Symonds's literary executor, and the Symonds family became alarmed at the prospect of an English edition of the book, and when it came out in the following year, Brown sought to buy up the entire edition.

A new edition without Symonds's name and his Greek essay was published later in the year by the 'Watford University Press', a fictitious publishing firm which had nothing to do with a university, but was actually the same publisher as that of the original edition, which was called 'Wilson and Macmillan'. Both editions were sponsored by a mysterious business man called 'Dr de Villiers' in whom, Ellis later confessed he was mistaken to place his trust.³³ It so happened that Dr de Villiers was in touch with the Legitimation League, a society formed for the advocacy of changes in the law on illegitimacy and other reforms. As the League was frequented by Anarchists, the Anarchist Section of Scotland Yard, under Chief Inspector Melville, who, as we have already seen, was largely instrumental in the arrest of the Walsall Anarchists, now fell upon this fresh victim. Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*, copies of which they found in

the office of the League, gave them their excuse for action. George Bedborough, secretary of the League and editor of its organ *The Adult*, was arrested in May 1898, and tried at the Old Bailey. A Free Press Defence Committee was set up, and issued an appeal signed by prominent radical and Socialist leaders. Bedborough, however, succumbed to police pressure, and pleaded guilty to the charge that he had sold 'a certain lewd, wicked, bawdy, scandalous, and obscene libel' in the form of the book by Ellis. Carpenter wrote an indignant letter to the *Saturday Review*: 'That Mr. Havelock Ellis, by the outcome of the Bedborough case, should be left with a slur upon his name and book is a gross scandal.'³⁴ Dr de Villiers against whom Carpenter had warned Ellis because of his yet more mysterious consort, 'a puckered creole' as he called her,³⁵ was a professional German swindler wanted for many years by Scotland Yard. His identity was finally unmasked, but he died a few hours after his arrest in Cambridge in 1902.³⁶

'The line of battle is deploying itself so to speak towards a great general engagement – which must be on us before long – & in which we shall have to stand by & aid each other', wrote Carpenter to Oates. Indeed, 'a general engagement' had come in the form of the Bedborough case in which, although Ellis was not put on trial, his book was condemned as 'obscene'. It was far worse than the 'set-back' that the boycotting of Carpenter's own works had seemed to him; it was a rout. Ellis retreated into his scholarly work and decided to publish its results abroad only.

Carpenter attempted a sally into the enemy's camp with an article on sex education.³⁷ He continued his lonely fight to enlighten public opinion about homosexuality. *Ioläus, an Anthology of Friendship* came out in 1902, collecting Phaedrus's speech, Michelangelo's sonnets, Tennyson's 'in Memoriam', Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass', and many other poems and essays on the subject. *Love's Coming of Age* apparently sold well: it was expanded in the fifth edition (1906) so as to include the privately issued pamphlet on 'Homogenic Love'. Meanwhile, a collection of his other essays and articles on homosexuality together with 'Homogenic Love' was published as *The Intermediate Sex* in 1908. He did not win the battle, but his writings became a rallying point for those who shared his nature, and gave them some confidence and hope for the future.

TWELVE

GEORGE MERRILL

CARPENTER'S MILLTHORPE *ménage* had been going through a series of crises of its own, owing largely to the emergence of George Merrill as the most beloved of all his friends. Merrill was a typical product of the Sheffield slums: he never had any education in the modern sense, and led an unsettled life. He was about twenty when Carpenter first met him in the winter of 1889-90 in a railway carriage, travelling from Sheffield to Totley. Though it was a momentary encounter, Merrill's 'somewhat free style of dress' and 'look of wistful sadness' attracted Carpenter's attention, and recognition soon developed into acquaintance and intimacy.

Sam Merrill, George's father, was an engine-driver, but he had had his eye damaged by an accident and took to drink. George's mother Carpenter thought 'splendid' - 'such a great big woman, with her Sheffield *lingo* & slum idioms'.¹ Merrill was 'intensely feminine' in his mind and character, and 'fairly muscular' in appearance and build, and, Carpenter believed, was one of those men who never fell in love with the opposite sex. He had worked as a barman, and in a workshop, and at Scarborough, as the servant of an 'Italian Count' in his hotel, getting him out of bed to bathe in the morning. He was out of work when Carpenter saw him in the train. Carpenter found him a cleaning and tidying-up job at the office of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. Merrill began to frequent Millthorpe, and in due time was to replace all others in the affection and 'comradely' love of our subject.²

In those days Albert Fearnough and his family were still at

Millthorpe, Albert taking charge of Carpenter's market-gardening. The Fearnoughs were friendly to Merrill, and welcomed him when he came 'along the muddy lanes at night or in whirling snow', with Carpenter 'dragging him out through the woods and fields', and Merrill himself, recalled Carpenter, was 'all the time so exhausted with the week's work that he would almost go to sleep on my arm'.³ Fearnough, who meant so much to Carpenter in his early days in Sheffield, was now ready to go. In March 1893, 'when the period of our experiment came to an end', wrote Carpenter rather laconically in his memoirs, 'Fearnough returned to his old trade of scythe-making in Sheffield'.⁴ When he and his family left, Carpenter thought of keeping George Merrill there as his successor, but he felt it premature, and George Adams and his family moved in to look after the house and the gardens.

George Adams was the reverse of Fearnough in many ways, town-bred, rather slight and thin, and artistically minded. He carried on the now well-advertised work of sandal-making, and added bee-keeping to his other activities. According to Henry Salt, George was 'kindly and whimsical. . . quick-tempered, a good hater, yet the most faithful of friends', 'by nature a true artist', and 'his handiwork in sandals was of the best, and some of his water-colours quite charming'.⁵

With George Adams as the housekeeper, Millthorpe became more social and even Socialistic than before. Olive Schreiner came and spent three weeks in the summer of 1893 in a cottage 'just down the road'. Bruce Glasier and Katharine St John Conway came and spent part of their honeymoon there about the same time. Katharine, a graduate of Newnham College, Cambridge, had been converted to Socialism by the shock of watching a band of striking women cotton-weavers marching into the fashionable Church of All Saints at Clifton, and also by reading Carpenter's *England's Ideal* which some of the Bristol Socialists recommended to her after the Clifton incident. 'For young lovers he [Carpenter] had such special kindness', she wrote on her honeymoon visit: 'He received and hid in his heart all sorts and conditions of "confessions", and healed and sent us forth to a new gladness of life, with the cruel devil of self-righteousness exorcized and Mrs. Grundy dissolved in happy laughter.'⁶ When Ashbee visited Millthorpe in September 1895, he

found the place 'transformed with flowers and fruit trees' and also with the two Adams children with golden hair but bodies thin and delicate, whom 'Carpenter planted . . . out here for there was little chance of their living in the town.'

But the happiness and contentment which seemed to cluster in the Derbyshire dale did not last long. For one thing, 'comradeship' had not established itself squarely among Carpenter's working-class friends, and its assertion often clashed with their family ties. 'The Shortland family in an everlasting broil with each other & George Merrill tormented to death by a drunken father & brother', wrote Carpenter to Mrs Salt.⁸ He was especially concerned about George Merrill, who had left his job at the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* after a quarrel with a fellow worker. Carpenter secured a job for him as a waiter at the Hydropathic Establishment at Baslow only four miles from Millthorpe. He sometimes visited Merrill there or met him half-way on the moors. The following two letters Merrill wrote from 'The Hydro' to Carpenter are typical of him. 'Are you having a nice time *dear one* and not tiring yourself to much. I shall be glad to see thy dear face back again as I have such longings to kiss those sweet lips of thine.'⁹ A few days later Merrill wrote again: 'I'm pleased you had a nice time at Cambridge. What a shame dear been mixed up with all those women, dont let them turn your head with flattery . . . I think of you every night and morning and wish your arms where round me.'¹⁰ Then Merrill 'got the sack' from the Hydro, but through Jim Shortland he obtained a place as a labourer in the armour-plate department of Vickers and Maxims. In July 1897, Carpenter took Merrill for a holiday in Wales. 'His attachment to me seems to increase', he wrote to Oates, 'as he becomes deeper in feeling & in understanding of life & is quite absorbing to him; & I feel a great tenderness towards him, as to a son.'¹¹

In August, Carpenter spent a few days with Hukin in the Lake District. On his return he found 'G.M. ill with really bad rheumatism (& severe fever), & Max [Flint] laid up out of sympathy!' He was quite troubled about Merrill who was 'suffering from such frightful nervous depression & palpitations of the heart - sort of hysteria'. To Alf Mattison of Leeds he wrote:

What trials & heart searchings in all directions! Surely out of these flames some Phoenix will at last arise! G.M. & I walked down in a restful quiet

mood. G. suffers so much in his little heart that one cannot but feel for him. Like so many others today he seems to be living in pain – twisted out of his right shape.

Indeed, Carpenter was so much overwhelmed by the ‘extraordinary tensions of the spirit’ around his Millthorpe household that even the national lock-out of the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which was the principal labour struggle of the period, failed to elicit much reaction from him. ‘Is not this lock-out business beastly? & how depressing the outlook!’ he wrote to Mattison.¹²

As a result of these tensions among Carpenter’s friends at Millthorpe, George and Lucy Adams threatened to move out. ‘I feel that in the long run it will have to come to a separation’, wrote Carpenter to Mrs Salt:

The only alternative would be for me to leave the place *entirely* to them – but I doubt if they would accept that now – and I am not sure that I feel prepared to offer it. So I shall probably be left tied by the leg to Millthorpe & the dear Max. If Max doesn’t peg out before the A’s leave I shall probably get George Merrill – that arch impostor & double-dyed villain – to come & keep house for us. He has a talent for housekeeping & Max is devoted to him. If Max does peg out before, I shall probably sell up or let the place, & start on a butterfly existence of my own (including a flat in Holborn!). . . Of course all these troubles arise from my outrageous temperament. If I only had a nice smug little wife (can’t you see her – rather short & short sighted & dumpy?) these things would never have happened. I should have had a ‘career’ in the world – & probably been a Bishop by this time.¹³

The criticism of Merrill to a correspondent who was in any case rather suspicious of him did not mean much. In fact, Carpenter came to like Merrill more and more: ‘G.M. is very sweet & twines himself round my heart more & more – but I don’t want to let him monopolise or depend on me too much. G.A. is so dreadfully untrustworthy – that is the trouble with him’, he wrote to Oates.¹⁴ By the end of 1897 he had practically settled the matter. He would remain at Millthorpe ‘with Max (& G.M.)’, and this would present ‘great possibilities’;¹⁵ but taking into account his apparently intentional disparagement of Merrill, the crucial factor in his decision appears to have been his fatherly affection for Max.

On 1 February 1898, ‘G.A. went off like a great baby sulking &

wouldn't even say good morning. Lucy behaved better.¹⁶ On the following day Merrill moved in. A week later, Carpenter wrote to Oates: 'I wish you could come in here this evening. Max & G & I are sitting so smug by the fire – G. doing some ironing – ironing linen & flannel collars. G. is so happy. He thoroughly *enjoys* house-work, & I must say does it beautifully – every thing so clean & neat & in its place – & cooks lovely little dinners for us.'¹⁷ Carpenter later recalled that his decision to live with George Merrill had excited as much resistance and protest as the relinquishment of his orders and fellowship. He received 'no end of letters' criticising his action,¹⁸ but unfortunately he did not preserve them.

It was, however, largely by accident that Merrill became Carpenter's sole companion. 'Bob' – Robert Muirhead – had been a married man for some time. Within a few years after the Adamses' departure, Carpenter lost some more of his close friends either by death or by marriage. He had been worried about Oates's health, as he found him 'very shaky in nerves &c.'¹⁹ For his Easter holiday in 1899, he visited the Italian Riviera to join him during his recuperation. He was again with Oates at Alassio in April 1901. The spring in Italy was very cold that year, and Oates again fell ill. He died on 8 January 1902. Towards the end of that year, Carpenter received £3000 from the executors of Oates's will.²⁰

Meanwhile, Max Flint had moved lodgings. He was soon sent to a nursing home at Bournemouth. 'Tell me, Max, whether you are wanting anything in the way of clothes', wrote Carpenter: 'I think you must be running short. I enclose 10/- which may be useful for some little things.'²¹ Max died on 9 February 1902, and 'the Rabbis carried off Max's body at the last & he is buried at Southampton!'²² On 12 July Alf Mattison married his girlfriend Florrie, and Carpenter sent them a cheque for £10.

The storm was over. At Millthorpe he was left with only George Merrill whom he dearly loved. Yet Merrill, like Max, was his 'dear son' originally. In his *Towards Democracy* he described Merrill as one who 'laid [his] life down' at the feet of Háfiz:

I take thy gift, so gracious and sparkling-clear,
Thy native offering, as of a simple Nature-child,

Wondering, like one who sees a rose in winter blooming, or
cypress 'mid a wilderness of rocks;

. . .

Come, son (since thou hast said it), out of all Shiráz
Háfiz salutes thee comrade. Let us go
A spell of life along the road together.²³

Thus Háfiz, or Carpenter, exalted the product of the Sheffield slums into an ideal man of nature. The Salts, however, regarded him as an evil influence on Carpenter and tended to avoid him.

Charles Sixsmith, one of the earlier members of a little Whitman society at Bolton, Lancashire, who often visited Millthorpe and also accompanied Carpenter and Merrill on trips to sunnier lands, to Switzerland, Corsica, or Sicily, had opportunities to observe him more closely:

Although he was moody, he was usually very gay and lively. . . but whenever he stepped over the line Edward always excused him, saying it was his childlike spontaneity which was rare and refreshing to see. He protected Edward from the bores, and his wit and fun relieved any tense or dull moments with serious-minded visitors.

George had a pleasing voice, and would sing Schumann or Schubert's songs to Carpenter's accompaniment of piano.²⁴ In an interview published in an Irish newspaper, Carpenter was reported to have said that the most sensible man he knew was George Merrill, for 'he never read my books', and George added: 'I am like the boy who would not eat jam because he worked where it was made.'²⁵ Indeed, jam was made, but how did it taste? Carpenter believed that love – homogenic love – should be creative in the arts and literature, but how creative was it? To these questions we now have to turn.

THIRTEEN

LITERATURE AND SEX

LIVING with George Merrill as his companion and helper, and equipped with the substantial legacy from his deceased friend Oates, Carpenter now settled upon a course of literary production. He had already published a study of Wagner, and emphasised the element of primitivism which, in his view, Wagner shared with Millet and Whitman. In his book *Angels' Wings*, which incorporated this study, he spoke of 'the Religion of the future of which the artists and science-workers will be priests', an almost Saint-Simonian idea. Beethoven would replace Newton as the greatest priest in this newest Christianity. Carpenter felt that the art of life was to know that life was art and expression, and went on to argue that it was necessary from time to time to clear the ground so that there might be more space for expression; hence his advocacy of the return to nature.¹

He remained under the spell of the Wagnerian idea, and tried his hand in the revival of village drama by putting on his three-act play, *St. George and the Dragon*, in 'a picturesque old barn' next to his field, where he had formed a social club of the villagers. The part of the priest, who witnessed the downfall of the Monster, was played by Carpenter himself. A local critic commended 'an extraordinary dignity about the whole performance'.² 'The scene in the dim-lit raftered old barn, full of unsophisticated country folk and the grave tones of the priest, gave one a sense of being in more primitive days', wrote Sixsmith who was present.³ Obviously Carpenter hoped that a communal drama would revitalise the communal life in villages which was fast decaying because of the exodus of the young people.

In 1904 his volume entitled *Art of Creation* came out, in which he argued that the achievements of modern science would enable 'a great synthesis' of all human thought on creation. He was now thinking in terms of physical and biological science and psychology, and not of mechanical science. Whereas in the last century creation was looked upon as 'a process of Machinery', it was regarded today, he declared, as 'an Art', and Science was now able to provide a new form to the old philosophy. Man was no longer an automaton, but was creative. Creation was 'an everlasting evolution and expression of inner meanings into outer forms', and all this he recounted in an exposition of 'the three stages of consciousness', simple consciousness, self-consciousness, and cosmic or universal consciousness. His friend Goldie Dickinson criticised the book for its central idea, 'World Self', which was 'a very obscure conception'.⁴ Beatrice Webb, on the other hand, thought very highly of it as she felt it contained 'the metaphysics of the Socialist creed as to social relations - the Faith we Hold'.⁵

Carpenter now dealt with the problems of 'Morality under Socialism'. He welcomed Nietzsche's influence as 'a healthy reaction' to the weakness of Christianity. But Nietzsche, he thought, went to the opposite extreme, turning the worship of force almost into a dogma. Carpenter himself interpreted Nietzsche's 'Beyond-man' in the plural as 'Beyond-men' whose action and reaction would cancel and destroy each other. The New Morality as Carpenter understood it consisted of two points: 'the realisation of the Common Life' and 'the recognition of Individual Affection and Expression', and its method was 'to abandon formulae'.⁶ G. K. Chesterton, who deplored Nietzsche's influence on Carpenter, declared that all this talk about 'beyond good and evil' was nonsense, but conceded that Carpenter's philosophy was 'strictly virtuous and stark naked'.⁷

In 1902 *Who Shall Command the Heart?* which formed the fourth part of his *Towards Democracy* was published. 'The Ocean of Sex' was ecstatic; 'O Joy Divine of Friends' was equally indicative; and 'O Child of Uranus' was almost autobiographical. Havelock Ellis, who carefully went through the new part of the book, liked 'the whole of it'.⁸ But Blatchford's reaction was perhaps more typical of the enlightened public, especially of the Socialist world in

general. He said, he liked *Towards Democracy* when he first read it. But he had changed; so had Carpenter. 'Edward Carpenter is not a young man; he is a scholar, and he knows the world. Why should he affront us by echoes of Walt Whitman's lubberly frankness about sex?'⁹ Referring to this statement in the *Clarion*, Bruce Glasier wrote in his diary: 'It is rude and irrelevant in tone, but I am bound to say that I agree entirely with his objection to Whitman and Carpenter's celebration of sexual sensation. I feel I abhor as strongly as Blatchford does orgiastic literature.'¹⁰

Salt's biographer gives us an account of Shaw's mission to Millthorpe to protest against *Love's Coming of Age* which Shaw had not read: Charlotte, his wife, had persuaded him to go and talk frankly to Carpenter about associating the Socialist movement with this 'sex nonsense'. On his return to London Shaw read the little book and was so charmed with it that he sent a letter apologising for his 'bad manners'. He would incorporate his own views on sex, marriage, and love in a play.¹¹ This was most likely *Getting Married* (1908), in which Shaw remarked that there would be 'a strike against marriage' unless the law of marriage was made more human and reasonable. Shaw however was greatly annoyed when he was asked to sign a manifesto condemning the Labouchere Amendment of 1885 against male homosexuality. 'No movement could survive association with such a propaganda', he said:

I can sympathize with E.C.'s efforts to make people understand that the curious reversal in question is a natural accident, and that it is absurd to persecute it or connect any general moral deficiency with it. But to attempt to induce it in normal people as a social safety valve would be ruinous, and could seem feasible only to abnormal people who are unable to conceive how frightfully disagreeable – how abominable, in fact – it is to the normal, even to the normal who are abnormally susceptible to natural impulses.¹²

The medical authorities were more emphatic in disapproving of Carpenter. The *British Medical Journal* criticised his *Intermediate Sex* for its reiteration *ad nauseam* of 'praise and laudation for creatures and customs which are generally regarded as odious' and went so far as to describe male homosexuality as 'unnatural and criminal practices'.¹³

More vexatious than the public or private obloquy which was no doubt disagreeable to Carpenter was a personal campaign against him conducted by a local obscurantist by the name of M. D. O'Brien. In the autumn of 1908 when Carpenter spoke on 'Socialism & State-Interference' in Sheffield and Chesterfield, O'Brien challenged the speaker personally on the question of Socialism and vice. He prepared a pamphlet called *Socialism and Infamy: The Homogenic or Comrade Love Exposed, An Open Letter in Plain Words for a Socialist Prophet, to Edward Carpenter, M.A.*, in which he called Carpenter 'a follower and imitator of Walt Whitman' whose writings were 'far too obscene to be fit for publication in this country', and he suggested that Carpenter had been concocting a revolutionary plot at Millthorpe. 'During the twenty years of your residence in Cordwell Valley', he wrote, 'thousands of persons of both sexes have come from all parts of the globe to that out of the way place to worship at the shrine of their divinity', and many of them, together with their 'prophet', belonged to 'an international Communistic Brotherhood, a band of "comrades, friends, and lovers"', linked together by one common bond of guilt and infamy, for overthrowing private property, private homes, and private families throughout the world'; they were waiting for a signal to rise simultaneously against these institutions.¹⁴ O'Brien was simply a rabid anti-Socialist, and so he was also wildly attacking Blatchford and Hyndman, Bax and Quelch, but above all the advocate of 'the infernal thing' called 'Comradeship'.¹⁵

When Carpenter was away in Italy, O'Brien put in an appearance in the village of Holmesfield and called on the Hukins who lived there. He was carrying 'a satchel full' of copies of the *Infamy* pamphlet, and distributed them broadcast. He handed one to Fannie at the back door. George Adams, who lived nearby, saw O'Brien, who said to him: 'You know it's libellous. Carpenter could prosecute me.' 'A. is very alarmed', wrote Hukin to Carpenter, '& thinks the situation very dangerous for you. I think if he has nothing more than your writings to base his accusations upon he may well be ignored.'¹⁶ From Florence where he was staying with Merrill, Carpenter at once replied, saying that 'O'Brien's explosion' would not carry much weight, as it was 'so extreme and violent that it

would overbalance itself'.¹⁷ Hukin was not convinced: he was much worried about the behaviour of Merrill which was liable to incur suspicion. 'G. [Merrill] is the real problem', he wrote in another letter to Carpenter:

With all the stories going about concerning him I think it would be wise to keep him away for the present. Of course one does not know how much O'B knows, still, one must be careful at present. Strange stories are afloat. Fanny told me yesterday that two different women had told her that a number of women at Dronfield [where O'Brien lived] were anxious to know when you were returning that they might waylay & mob you. I don't set much store by these tales, tho' I daresay O'B has managed to stir up a good deal of feeling against you in that particular quarter.¹⁸

Carpenter was then a member of the Village Council of Holmesfield, and the vicar, the Reverend Charles Bradshaw, had received a letter begging him not to preside at any Council meeting if Carpenter was there, but the vicar, Hukin wrote to Carpenter, declared that 'he had known you for 20 years & he "had no reason to believe that you had lived anything but an absolutely clean life"'.¹⁹

When Carpenter returned from his holiday at the end of April 1909, he felt 'rather shattered' by all the upset that had taken place during his absence.²⁰ A second edition of O'Brien's *Infamy* pamphlet came out, containing quotations from Carpenter's original *Homogenic Love*. Carpenter wrote to Glasier, now editor of the *Labour Leader*, asking him to publish in his paper a brief notice to encourage the readers to read his own book. Glasier received O'Brien's pamphlet from South Wales where it was being circulated, with an alarmed appeal that he should reply to it. Glasier was dismayed, and thought the pamphlet 'villainous', for it sounded as if Carpenter had justified sodomy. Moreover, the reading of *The Intermediate Sex* failed to convince Glasier, for he felt uneasy about the fact that the author apparently did not condemn physical intercourse among men. Rumours of sodomy in various circles reached him, and he was much troubled by the 'rather doubtful character' of some of Carpenter's friends. He even wrote to Carpenter, asking if he would repudiate physical intercourse.²¹ It does not appear that Carpenter answered in the affirmative. Then O'Brien published what Carpenter called 'a most beastly pamphlet' addressed to the vicar, accusing him of being

in league with Carpenter for not chasing him out of the parish. The pamphlet quoted the article published in the *British Medical Journal*, and 'points me & my house out in so many words, but mentions no one else – except the Vicar whose mouth has been shut by "extreme wealth"!!' wrote Carpenter. He had 'a quite friendly letter' from the Vicar, 'saying that all his congregation are "up in arms" (against O'B)'.²² In fact, O'Brien overreached himself by attacking the vicar. He was prosecuted for some minor offence and was deserted even by his family, and Carpenter emerged almost unscathed from this harassing experience. Almost – for he was not re-elected to the Village Council.²³

As Conrad Noel observed in an interview, Carpenter in his 60s still retained 'the bright eyes of a youth' and an 'unabated . . . zeal for life'.²⁴ But we now hear very little about George Merrill from Carpenter, probably as little as we hear about a housewife from her husband, except perhaps that he helped his master to write a sketch of the life of the fowl they kept in the garden.²⁵ Carpenter kept discreet silence about his relations with him.

His *Intermediate Sex*, however, was a quiet success: it went through three impressions in four years. He was thus encouraged to write, not merely in defence of homosexuality, but also in praise of its unique virtues. He somehow believed that 'there *is* an organic connection between the homosexual temperament and unusual psychic or divinatory powers', and sought to prove this contention in an article published in a French periodical.²⁶ The Jews and the Christians both persecuted homosexuals as heretics and sorcerers, and these circumstances, together with their peculiarities as the feminine man and the masculine woman, or the non-warlike man and the non-domestic woman, he maintained, led to their adopting extraordinary or even uncanny activities and vocations by becoming seers, healers, or teachers of esoteric arts, and thus 'laid the foundation of the priesthood, and of science, literature and art'. His conclusion sounds somewhat too sweeping, but he went ahead with a eulogy of homosexuality which, he now declared, was 'a forward force in human evolution'.

Through this study, which was also published in Germany and America, and many foreign editions of his other works, Carpenter

established an international reputation as an expert in this field. In 1913 Francis Johnson, General Secretary of the ILP, introduced to him an ILP member named E. B. Lloyd, who spent some time in Germany, visiting Dr Hirschfeld of Berlin and other authorities on sexual studies. 'His house is a kind of Metropolitan or International Club & Auskunfts-bureau of Homo-Sex. . . Hirschfeld talked much about you: you really ought to go once to Berlin', wrote Lloyd from Germany.²⁷ He was soon back in London, helping Carpenter in an attempt to found a British Society for the Study of Sex-Psychology, in which Laurence Housman, the writer and dramatist, also co-operated. In May 1914 Carpenter received an invitation from Dr Albert Moll on behalf of the International Gesellschaft für Sexualforschung to take part in the First International Congress for the Study of Sex which was scheduled to be held for several days from 31 October 1914. Carpenter at once sent a reply, saying that he would gladly come and give a short discourse on the subject: 'Die Bedeutung der Homosexualität'.²⁸ The war intervened, and the projected conference was never held.

Even at home Carpenter was revered by some as a seer and a prophet of homosexuality, though there was bound to be some sort of conspiracy of silence among his followers. Ferdinand Schiller, who occupied 'the supreme position' in the emotional life of Goldie Dickinson, wrote on Carpenter's *Homogenic Love*: 'I have read it and I suppose it's all in order, though I have a kind of feeling that these things are better left unsaid.'²⁹ Siegfried Sassoon, then an aspiring young poet, was certainly more enthusiastic about Carpenter's writings. 'I am sending you a few sonnets', wrote Sassoon in a long confessional letter to Carpenter:

not for what is *in them*, but to thank you for all that I reverence and am grateful for in you & your writings. It was not until October last year, when I was just 24, that, by an accident, I read your 'Intermediate Sex', & have since read 'Towards Democracy', & 'Who shall command the heart'. I am afraid I have not studied Socialism sufficiently to be in sympathy with what I know of it; but your words have shown me all that I was blind to before, & have opened up the new life for me, after a time of great perplexity & unhappiness. Until I read the 'Intermediate Sex', I knew absolutely nothing of that subject, (& was entirely *unspotted*, as I

am now), but life was an empty thing, & what ideas I had about homosexuality were absolutely prejudiced, & I was in such a groove that I couldn't allow myself to be what I wished to be, & the intense attraction I felt for my own sex was almost a subconscious thing, & my antipathy for women a mystery to me. . . I write to you as the leader & the prophet.³⁰

Sassoon added in this letter that although he led a leisurely life in the country, he was 'not mixed up with smartness & luxurious social doings, as my name might lead you to think'. Carpenter at once replied and invited Sassoon to come to Millthorpe. Their friendship thus formed was later renewed during the Great War which they both regarded as a human tragedy.

Robert Graves had just finished his school years at Charterhouse when the war broke out. He had been in love with a choir boy three years younger than himself, and when the headmaster took him to task for this illicit affair he referred loftily to 'the advantage of friendship between elder and younger boys, citing Plato, the Greek poets, Shakespeare, Michelangelo and others who had felt as I did'.³¹ The headmaster let him go without taking any action. Graves no doubt owed a great deal to Carpenter for this triumphant acquittal. 'I am deeply indebted to you', he wrote to Carpenter:

'Iolaus' & 'The Intermediate Sex' . . . have absolutely taken the scales from my eyes & caused me immense elation: you have provided a quite convincing explanation for all the problems, doubts & suspicions that I have been troubled by in my outlook on sex, & I see everything clearly.

He informed Carpenter that his 'House' had emerged from 'a long period of vice' and he knew 'at least 12 in a house of 60 who have the courage of their convictions'. 'There must be many more who have not', he went on, 'People are always confiding their affairs to me. So I am in a position to state that these mutual attractions are the purest & most inspiring factors even in Charterhouse School life. They are quite spontaneous in nearly every case & not due either to force of example or to beastliness.'³² This encounter with Carpenter's works and ideas was probably only a brief episode in the intellectual life of Robert Graves, who, in his own words, 'began to think for [himself] . . . just before the end of the war':³³ he did not even mention Carpenter in his later account of his school-days.

A much more potent influence was exerted by Carpenter upon the literary life of E. M. Forster, who, in spite of his fame as the author of *Howards End*, was troubled with his old problems, 'sexual frustration and a sense of ineffectiveness'. 'Carpenter was a healer, who worked through personal and physical contact', wrote P. N. Furbank, Forster's biographer, 'He made Forster ashamed of his fidgetiness and self-consciousness'.³⁴ In the autumn of 1913, some time after his return from India where he had shared part of his journey with Lowes Dickinson, Forster paid a visit to Carpenter. 'I approached him through Lowes Dickinson, and as one approaches a saviour', he wrote. He was then staying at Harrogate with his ailing mother, and seems to have visited Millthorpe two or three times. On one of these visits his host and George Merrill 'combined to make a profound impression on me and to touch a creative spring', he recalled: 'George Merrill also touched my backside – gently and just above the buttocks. I believe he touched most people's. The sensation was unusual and I still remember it, as I remember the position of a long vanished tooth'.³⁵

Back at Harrogate, he at once began to write *Maurice*, a homosexual novel, in which Maurice, the hero, found a true love in his friend's gamekeeper; he thus threw overboard all respectability and determined that they 'must live outside class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till death'. The book was completed by the summer of 1914, and Forster sent the manuscript to Carpenter. 'My dear & blessed E.M.', replied Carpenter:

(I wish you had a *name*. Why do you always hide behind initials? What do your friends call you? My name is Edward, or 'Chips'!) I *have* read your 'Maurice' after all, and am very much pleased with it. I don't always like your rather hesitating tantalising impressionist style – tho' it has subtleties – but I think the story has many fine points. . . . I am so glad you end up on a major chord. I was so afraid you were going to let Scudder [the gamekeeper] go at the last – but you saved him & saved the story, because the end, tho' improbable, is not impossible & is the one bit of real romance – wh. those who understand will love.³⁶

'Those who understand' were not many, and more than half a century had to pass before altered public opinion allowed the book to be published in 1971, after the author's death.

One more English novelist remains to be related to Carpenter. This is D. H. Lawrence, and it has been suggested that most of what Lawrence wrote between 1912 and 1918 was written under the shadow of Carpenter.³⁷ Traces of the 'influence' alluded to were mostly literary, though the two authors were certainly linked together in the official mind. Thus shortly after the suppression of *The Rainbow* in 1915, a police officer called on Stanley Unwin with a marked copy of Carpenter's *Intermediate Sex*, which Unwin published. He found it obscene and threatened to prosecute, but upon Unwin's protestation that it was a harmless scientific work, the police dropped the matter.³⁸ Carpenter himself was deeply interested in the prosecution of *The Rainbow*. Among his numerous newspaper cuttings there is one about the publisher Methuen who was ordered to destroy over a thousand copies of it.³⁹ He managed to obtain a copy from his friend William E. Hopkin of Eastwood, who was also a friend of Lawrence's. 'I must say the suppression of the volume ridiculous', he wrote:

Some of the details are rather intimate certainly, but Lord have mercy on us! What is life if it is not intimate? I don't find fault with the book on that ground at all; but I don't like the style. The style is jerky, and rather 'forced' – something artificial about it; also rather spun out. There is a cleverness certainly. Our 'cleverness' is apt to become a bore if indulged in too much.⁴⁰

Yet his interest in Lawrence was never personal, and he apparently never met him. After all, Carpenter's 'romantic humanism' proved incompatible with 'the potential totalitarianism of a Nietzschean Lawrence'.⁴¹

His first autobiographical work, *Sketches from Life in Town and Country* had been published in 1908. It consisted of a series of episodes relating to various aspects of his life, many of which we have already referred to. His *Towards Democracy*, now a complete edition in four parts, kept on being reprinted, and became a bible to many young Socialists. 'A little green leather edition was always in our pockets', wrote Fenner Brockway, recalling his youthful years before the First World War. 'A group of us lived together', he went on:

and on Sunday evenings we invited some of the thinkers and prophets of the time to have tea with us and afterwards to talk to us. Carpenter came one evening. I remember him vividly. His head and features were of extraordinary beauty: his face a chiselled statue, clear-cut and of perfect outline; his eye bright and kindly; there was refinement in his every movement and in the tone of his voice. One admired and loved him at once.⁴²

Lord Brockway, as he now is, had something to add to his old recollections: 'I had no knowledge then of his sexual behaviours, but I was almost attracted to him, quite unconsciously, as though I were with a woman.'⁴³

An element of sexual attraction, though perhaps only dimly perceived, was there in the fellowship of Socialism, and sustained its moral fervour. Carpenter, in spite of some alarmist outcries against his cautious defence of homosexuality, was now more or less settled in congenial personal associations or what he called 'the realisation of the Common life'.

FOURTEEN

CRITICAL YEARS

CARPENTER'S MYSTIC TURN OF MIND was gaining the upper hand as he advanced in age, but he willingly helped a series of new crusades in the critical years of Imperialism and social unrest: the opposition to the South African War, the strengthening of the Labour Party, Syndicalism and the suffragette campaign. And he fought each of these causes as passionately and whole-heartedly as if he were still young.

It was Olive Schreiner's vigorous plea for her compatriots, the Boers, that first drew Carpenter's attention to the problems of Imperialism. 'Things are going on with us from bad to worse', she wrote in the early summer of 1899:

Fancy having absolutely to fight the capitalist for your life. It makes me a bit bitter when one thinks that the working men of England who have now the majority of votes are actually keeping Chamberlain in power, & backing up Rhodes to shoot us down. . . It is a strange strange thing Edward, to see a young nation waking up to the consciousness of its life & individuality. Chamberlain & the Capitalist may fight us & if All England joins solid behind them they may crush us. But it will be only for a time. We will rise again. And I am not sure they *can crush us at all!* It will take from 100,000 to 150,000 men to do it. We shall fall back on our wide desert plains & hills! & as fast as they beat us in one place we will rise in another. The Boer women are fine here; they keep up the men's spirits more than the men themselves. War means the ultimate severance of this country from England, but nothing can stop our ultimate freedom & growth.¹

Shortly before the beginning of the hostilities in South Africa, Carpenter presided at a meeting which was convened to resuscitate the defunct Sheffield Socialist Society, and in his speech described the Transvaal crisis as 'most inequitable and abominable'. 'We were trying to hound on a war with those solid Dutchmen in the Transvaal simply in the interests of a few speculators and financiers – chiefly Jews – who were running the gold mines in Johannesburg.'² The Society did not gain much support, and does not seem to have successfully resisted the current wave of Jingoism.

On New Year's Day, 1900, Carpenter wrote an article entitled 'Boer and Briton', which was then published as a leaflet by the Labour Press of Manchester. He was in full sympathy with the Dutch *bauers* or *boers* (farmers), who emigrated to South Africa in the seventeenth century, and after the Great Trek of 1836 discovered 'the Promised land of their wanderings' in 'an arid unfertile land where before the wild beasts had been'. 'If ever a people on earth made good their right to their land these people did', declared Carpenter. But 'think . . . of Johannesburg since gold was found there, since the gold fever set in – a hell full of Jews, financiers, greedy speculators, adventurers, prostitutes, bars, banks, gaming saloons, and every invention of the devil'. Indeed, Carpenter was as vehemently opposed to the Rand Capitalists as Olive Schreiner was, and almost as bitter against the Jews as H. M. Hyndman and some of the Radicals who were in the thick of a vigorous anti-war campaign at the time. But the Socialists were not united in their condemnation of the war, and the recurring famine in India and the Boxer Rebellion in China added fuel to the heat of controversy over the future of Empire. 'Britain wonders with a pious pretence of innocence why famine follows the flag', wrote Carpenter in a poem called 'Empire':

An empty House to hear the burden of the sorrows of India,
 And Irish questions treated with derision.
 O England, thou old hypocrite, thou sham, thou bully of weak
 nations whom thou were called to aid,
 Thy day of ruin surely is near at hand,
 Save for one thing – which scarcely may be hoped for –
 Save that a heart of grace within thee rise
 And stay the greed of gold – which else must slay thee.³

In a lecture he gave at the Bradford Labour Church in September 1900, he emphasised the 'steady drain' on Indian wealth, relying mainly upon Hyndman's studies on India.⁴ Hyndman, for his part, was interested in Carpenter's poem 'Empire', and wrote to him: 'I am afraid that is the truth. I scarcely see now how we are to build up the country again. . . Altogether. . . I take a very depressing view of the future though I admit that Revolution is a great education.'⁵

S. C. Cronwright Schreiner, Olive's husband, had been conducting a speaking tour in Britain on behalf of his own country, but he was forced to abandon his meetings 'in consequence of the relief of Mafeking & the mad state of the public opinion which has followed'.⁶ The war in South Africa dragged on in bitter guerrilla warfare as Olive had predicted. Carpenter, like Hyndman, found the general state of the country 'most desperate'; 'Is England going to the bottom of the sea?' he wrote to Mattison.⁷ Socialism was lying very low indeed all these years.

At an early stage of the war, Carpenter switched the main target of his criticism from South Africa to other parts of the world, and warned against the dangers of 'Commercial Imperial Expansion' in the East, 'the expansion of our factory system into India and China'.⁸ Especially China now assumed the grandeur of a utopia for him. He was bewitched by the vast, seemingly contented country in the East, just as he had been charmed by the sturdy independent nation of the Transvaal farmers. He was fascinated by the Chinese Academy which succeeded, as he believed, in directing the thought of the mass of the people by 'assist[ing] their "self-determination"', and went so far as to issue an appeal for a similar academy for Britain, a curious document to which, however, were appended two names which subsequently became famous: J. L. Hammond and J. M. Keynes.⁹

It is of some interest to note that when he discussed the problems of Imperialism in the East he was concerned more about culture than about politics of the nations threatened or otherwise touched by it. He spent some time in Morocco in 1903, and wrote a series of ten articles on his visit, which were published in the *New Age* from November 1906 to August 1907, but he made no reference to the Moroccan crisis which shook the Western world at the time. It was not international politics but Mohammedanism that absorbed his

attention. He compared 'the fixity of Islam', 'the medieval repose and sense of infinite time' with the modern commercial, scientific, even Socialistic world which was in flux.¹⁰ The 'primitive East' remained one important source of inspiration for his brand of Socialism.

South Africa was different, however, for he regarded the late war as a struggle between the two European nations. A new situation emerged with the formation of the Union of South Africa which, he said, was not an example of colonial self-government but a form of racial domination. The Union, he felt, would be controlled by the white population, dominated as it was by commercial aims among the British and also by 'a narrow and Biblical tradition' among the Boers; instead he urged 'a gradual delegation of political power' to the Black Africans.¹¹

In his criticism of Imperial expansion, he accepted the Hobsonian theory of under-consumption and suggested that the 'immense reserve' which arose as a result had been the cause of small wars to open up new countries, to plant new factories in outlying regions. 'Once the limit of the present artificial expansion over the globe has been reached, industrial depressions will become more and more severe'.¹² Certainly trade depression quickly returned, and he took part in the campaign for Right to Work, advocating the acquisition of land to provide work for the unemployed.¹³ In a letter to the *ASE Journal* of April 1905 – the monthly magazine of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers – he urged the union to start works of its own, co-operative production. This looked back to the days of Christian Socialism, of Maurice and Ludlow, but the letter also contained a good prediction of the future, for it expressed a hope that the next House of Commons would see 'the nucleus and beginning of a real Labour Party, which, as soon as it reached 15 or 20 members, will already begin to exercise a decided influence in the affairs of the nation'. The Labour Representation Committee, which had been set up in 1900 as a loose federation of the Socialist bodies and the trade unions, was now developing into a Labour Party under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald who had secretly arranged an electoral alliance with the Liberals.

The general election of January 1906 was a great victory for the

Liberals and their allies in the free trade cause, but within the Liberal alliance the success of the Labour Party, with 30 members elected, exceeded even Carpenter's sanguine expectations. Even Hyndman in Burley, though defeated in a three-cornered fight, gained a handsome vote of 4,932. 'The voting is going splendidly', wrote Carpenter: 'I am pleased with Hyndman's score. And it really all looks like a great success for Labour'.¹⁴

As a result of the unemployed agitation which was renewed after the election, the question of labour in the sweated industries began to be seriously discussed, and Carpenter was invited to speak on this subject at 'the Sweated Industries Exhibition' in Manchester in October 1906. He argued that the general conditions of the workers had perhaps improved but the same 'Fringe of Unemployed' remained intact. He also spoke in favour of the minimum wage at a National Conference on Sweated Industries held in Glasgow in the following year. Minimum wages, he declared, by stimulating markets would benefit employers as well as employees.¹⁵ His basic argument remained underconsumptionist and reformist. In a series of lectures and articles he now began to expound his Socialism in more practical terms.

As a farmer of some experience, Carpenter defended the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1907 against an attack made by a section of the ILP. The Act, he maintained, would encourage the transfer of land into the hands of the community. 'It is all very well to urge municipal and State farms run in a wholesale official style. . . . But to suppose that all agriculture is going to be reduced to this one monotonous form seems to be absurd.' A better result would be obtained, as Kropotkin argued in his *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, when the holdings were small. 'We want good human crops, as well as good crops of produce', he went on:

and some of the best sort of men are grown on small holdings – handy capable men able to turn their hands to all sorts of work, and enjoying freedom of invention and initiative such as they would not have on larger and public undertakings. I find some of the best all-round men in this parish belong to this class. Taking all together, the thing to be encouraged, I think, is the utmost variety – State or municipal forms, if you like, but also large and small separate holdings of all kinds, some of them being

co-operative and some non-co-operative, according to what is preferred – thus giving scope to every sort of character and temperament, and class of work and interest.¹⁶

Perhaps Carpenter's mixed economy in agriculture should be viewed as an example of the Fourierite utopia, in which individual temperaments and types of work were ideally correlated and thus the evils of division of labour were to be overcome by giving ample scope for the passion for change.¹⁷

Carpenter, for his part, was endeavouring to infuse Socialism into the Labour Party. In a lecture delivered in the Grand Theatre, Manchester, under the auspices of the local ILP, he declared that 'Socialism would transform industry, because it would bring into it the new spirit of Brotherhood'. The large audience became quite inspired and joined in singing his *England, Arise!* 'Full House! Over 2000', wrote Carpenter on the margin of the newspaper that reported his meeting.¹⁸ He saw in the tendency towards State interference an awakening of the public conscience, and identified the latter with the spiritual basis of Democracy. He therefore spoke in favour of public control of the coal mines and the milk supply, and declared:

As a public sentiment grew, and became palpable, even public administration would in some cases be hardly necessary. We should be able to say to private owners of industries that if they managed their own concerns in the public interest, with fair consideration for the health and welfare of their employees, the day for taking over those industries might be indefinitely postponed. . . . He believed that there would be in the future, to some extent, an honourable rivalry not of greed but of service.¹⁹

It appears from this speech that Carpenter had come round to believe that private enterprises could be persuaded to strive for the public good, and to that extent his advocacy of Socialism had become ethical. Or perhaps this was an element of his individualist Anarchism as it preferred private efforts to public administration. At least he came to stand for the mixed economy even in industrial production as he had done in agriculture.

'The gradual transformation of our industries and activities is inevitable', he wrote in an essay entitled *The Wreck of Modern Industry and its Reorganisation*. He now admitted that 'the Trust' was 'the halfway house to the Public Administration of Industry'

and the greater portion of the land and the greater number of the large industries would be collectively handled. But 'there will always remain a large fringe of independent workers – from village joiners and shoemakers, to decorative artists – to embody and illustrate the individualistic principle in Society'. He maintained that 'the proper balance between the individualist and communist principle in social life' would be decided upon by the future Socialist generation.²⁰ It was a restatement of his belief in the Socialist mixed economy.

Carpenter was among the group of prominent Socialists who wished success to the Labour Party at the general election in January 1910. 'I cordially endorse the policy of the Labour Party generally...' he wrote:

It has kept itself well rooted and based in the principles of Socialism, and yet has known how to gain a point here and there by the necessary 'give and take' of politics... A hard and fast irreconcilable line in politics is... like a man who becomes an absolute teetotaler because he is afraid of his own weakness.²¹

He was convinced that 'the tremendous growth of Socialism' was due mostly to 'the steady and plodding industry of the Labour Party, both in Parliament and in the innumerable branches scattered throughout the country'.²² Thus he placed a special emphasis on the party's local organisations, which showed a great increase in number in these years and which, comprising as they did local branches of the trade unions and of the Socialist societies in each area, were really consolidating the strength of the party.

Indeed, his 'Larger Socialism' was catholic enough to welcome both the Labour Party and its enemy, Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism. In May 1910, when his old friend Tom Mann returned from Australia, inspired with the new gospel, Carpenter was not unwilling to help him in his new campaign in Britain. He presided at a meeting in Sheffield at which Tom Mann spoke violently against 'sectarian unionism' and 'the belief in Labour salvation by Parliamentary action'; Carpenter at least agreed that 'the whole industrial situation was coming to a very definite and serious crisis'.²³

The year 1911 was a year of strikes: the ten-month Cambrian combine strike, which had already established the reputation of the

South Wales miners for militancy, dragged on till the summer; a seamen's strike spread from Southampton to all the major ports in the country; the dockers won a victory in London, and troops were brought in at Liverpool and clashed with rioters. The first national railway strike took place in August. The Miners Federation also staged a national strike to secure a minimum wage in the following February. By the autumn of 1911 Carpenter had been sufficiently impressed by the new ferment among the workers to start advocating the cause of Syndicalism. His notes for a lecture delivered about this time read: 'Join the Unions! and keep local action going! . . . Anyhow Right to strike must be guarded, unions wanted as much as ever, & strong Labour Party in House, also B.S.P.'²⁴ The British Socialist Party had just been formed as a result of unity of the left-wing forces, the old SDF, the ILP dissidents and the Clarion groups, an event which was significant more as a political reflection of the wide-spread 'labour unrest' than as the formation of a new united Socialist party.

Carpenter was never a propagandist of direct action himself, and the all-embracing quality of his Socialism and the emphasis he placed upon the aesthetic aspect of work made his Syndicalism peculiar to himself. He advocated a Syndicalist utopia in a lecture entitled 'Beauty in Civic Life'. 'Beauty is largely a matter of spontaneous production and expression', and machine production would paralyse spontaneity. 'I have not the least objection to using a machine, but I do not want it to use me'. Apparently as an ally of Guild Socialism, the new doctrine advocated through the *New Age*, he extolled the days of the 'great' guilds, when craftsmen produced things by their own instincts and inspiration and there was beauty in social life. These would be restored in his utopia where, in addition, nationalisation and municipalisation would reduce the working day to a minimum, say four hours, and the rest of the day be devoted to the spontaneous cultivation of the sense of beauty; Sabbath days would be revived and made more cheerful with orchestras, dramatic performances and other entertainments.²⁵

His old study of 'Non-Governmental Society' was now published as a pamphlet, for it contained an economic programme for his Syndicalism. He believed that the trade unions and co-operative societies, when they were engaged in 'the interchange of goods with

each other on an ever-growing scale', would represent 'a voluntary collectivism', which should work in parallel with the official collectivism of the State. This double collectivism would cultivate 'the sentiment of the Common Life' and bring about 'an anti-governmental and perfectly voluntary society' in the end. 'Private property will . . . subside into a matter of mere use or convenience; monetary reckonings and transfers, as time goes on, will seem little more than formalities – as between friends.' In short his Syndicalism, which provided the most mature form of his Anarchist belief, was a voluntary industrial arrangement that would emanate from the communal spirit, and as such it had very little to do with class war or class hatred. Yet he would give full support to a struggle against the coercive power of the state, as was shown in his sympathy with the Syndicalist 'Don't Shoot' campaign among the soldiers. In an article published in the first number of the *Anarchist*, a new weekly journal of the Scottish Anarchist movement, Carpenter commented on this campaign, saying that this, together with the spread of a free and voluntary co-operation 'in countless guilds' would open the way to a new era in our industrial life.²⁶

Carpenter took the initiative in drafting and presenting a memorial to Prince Kropotkin on the latter's seventieth birthday. In this document, which bore the signature of eighty-three Socialist and Radical friends of Kropotkin's in Great Britain and Ireland, the absence of the leaders of Syndicalism was perhaps more striking and conspicuous than that of the Social Democrats, who were the sworn enemies of the Anarchists.²⁷ 'The voluntary principle' was not enough for the exponents of working-class Syndicalism, while Carpenter held aloof from later developments of trade-union militancy.

Carpenter had once drawn attention to the 'healthy signs of revolt on the part of some of the lady class – revolt long delayed, but now spreading all along the line'.²⁸ It was 'the Uranian classes of men' like himself, he also argued, or those at least who were touched with 'the Uranian temperament', who chiefly supported the aspirations of women towards liberty, because theirs was not 'a proprietary sort of love'.²⁹

The Women's Social and Political Union, once 'a family party' founded by Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst, grew into a power and had

become a focus for the ladies' revolt. In 1907-8 more than five thousand meetings were organised under its auspices; in 1909-10 its organ, *Votes for Women*, reached the peak of its influence with a circulation of about 40,000 copies a week; it had an income and central offices far exceeding those at the disposal of the Labour Party.³⁰ Already in October 1906 there was an attempt to hold a meeting in the lobby of the House of Commons, when several speakers including Mrs Charlotte Despard, sister of General Sir John French and known for her social work at Nine Elms, and Mrs Cobden-Sanderson, daughter of Richard Cobden, were ejected and sent to Holloway prison. On their release Mrs Fawcett and her older and more respectable suffragist body, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, gave a banquet at the Savoy Hotel in their honour.

The WSPU had counted Keir Hardie among its principal supporters, but it broke with the Labour Party as the latter remained unconvinced of the case for an extension of the franchise on a limited property qualification. The severance was calculated to attract support of wealthy Conservatives to the women's cause. A series of 'Women's Parliaments' assembled in Caxton Hall, which became a rallying point for those who would march to the 'Men's Parliament' to get themselves arrested. Soon a split took place: Mrs Despard and her friends, though militant themselves, disagreed with 'the dictator' of the WSPU, withdrew and formed a rival body which adopted the name of the Women's Freedom League from the beginning of 1908. It was at the invitation of this group that Carpenter was finally persuaded to help the suffragettes.

'What we are fighting for is much more than the vote', wrote Mrs Despard to Carpenter:

It is Freedom - Woman's Freedom - to live and act and express that which is in her - that which when it finds expression, will help the sad world along. And it is right that I should specially rejoice in your sympathy and understanding because your songs have been an inspiration and a hope to me in many a dark hour.³¹

In October 1908, when the WSPU organised marches to Holloway prison protesting against the imprisonment of their leaders, Carpenter was seen marching abreast with Mrs Despard and the leaders of

the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage in a separate demonstration which was held at Alexandra Park, Manchester; he spoke on prison reform on one of the ten platforms set up in the park.³²

Lady Constance Lytton, daughter of the first Earl of Lytton, who was interested in prison reform, did her best to help the arrested WSPU leaders, and soon found herself in the ranks of the militant suffragettes. Carpenter probably came to know her through their mutual friend Olive Schreiner, and he sent her a copy of his pamphlet, *British Aristocracy and the House of Lords*, with which he had joined in the 'Peers or People' campaign then conducted by W. T. Stead. It was a scathing indictment of the House of Lords for 'its record of inefficiency and obstruction': the Lords ought to be replaced, he suggested, by something like the Chinese Academy! 'Your pamphlet. . . calls out my agreement more than anything I have read on the subject', replied Lady Lytton, but her mind was now absorbed by another question, that of women's suffrage. 'This question has bestirred me as nothing before', she went on: 'Party politics has always been repellent to me, the "tactics" of all the different groups seeming to me unnecessary as well as unworthy. And now I find myself a suffragette! . . . Now I am a whole hogger'.³³ In February 1909 she was among the twenty-eight women who were arrested and sent to prison for attempting to reach the House of Commons after another Women's Parliament. Desiring no privileges, she secured transfer to the ordinary cells. 'Prison was so amazingly interesting', she wrote shortly after her release:

that my mind was on the acutest alert the whole time and my flimsy body did not strike at the considerable hardship of the life in the way I had thought would be inevitable. . . It is the first time in my life that there has ever seemed to be any use for me & the sensation is wonderously invigorating. I have re-read your *Prisons, Police and Punishment* since being in Holloway and find it even better than before. The sheer imbecility of the present system nearly overwhelmed me at times, when under it. With the women there, the most noticeable thing about them, so far as I could tell, was their noncriminality in any true sense of the word. They most of them seemed the victims of a most unsatisfactory state of the law & public opinion.³⁴

The suffragettes introduced the new tactics of the hunger strike

and window-breaking, and the authorities retaliated with the 'atrocities' of forcible feeding. Lady Constance Lytton herself fell a victim to this atrocity. 'Since my last imprisonment', she wrote to Carpenter in March 1910, 'I have collapsed to a certain extent physically. I managed to hang on until I had both spoken & written a certain amount of my experiences & interested a good number of people.'³⁵ She returned to work in June, when she was appointed a paid organiser of the WSPU. After some more trying experiences she was reduced to a state of incapacity and remained so until her death in 1923.

Carpenter spoke at various meetings, especially in the north, for the cause of women. He once took part in a demonstration held in Trafalgar Square under the auspices of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage at which Mrs Despard as well as Laurence Housman spoke.³⁶ Housman accompanied him at other meetings, and he was with him when Carpenter was 'suddenly denounced from the back of the hall in the grossest terms as a man of infamous opinion and infamous life'. 'His accuser was an obscurantist of the deepest dye', recalled Housman,

but in that meeting were a great many of similar mind; and in those days the Women's movement was morbidly anxious for the preservation of its 'respectability'. . . He did not turn a hair; with perfect serenity and quiet choice of phrase he reduced the interruption to insignificance, and the meeting . . . continued undisturbed.³⁷

The incident was typical both of Carpenter and of 'the lady class'.

Carpenter renewed his old friendship with Isabella Ford of Leeds, a suffragist of old standing and an early member of the ILP, but by this time she had become weary of 'Women with a big W.'³⁸ He himself remained aloof from the later phase of the suffragette movement when assaults on property and incendiarism became their chief weapons. Indeed, his interest in the revolt of the women as well as in that of the workers now increasingly receded into the domain of ideas and of the spirit.

In 1910 Carpenter was sixty-six years old and began to look towards his end. Sometime in that year he wrote a speech to be read at his own funeral, in which he described death as 'a perfectly natural

event' and 'part of the wholesome order of the world'. Any attempt to avoid 'the common lot' seemed to him 'mean and unfriendly'. He firmly believed that love would unite friends after death as it did before. 'Therefore', he wrote,

do not think too much of the dead husk of your friend, or mourn too much over it; but send your thoughts out towards the real soul or self which has escaped - to reach it. For so, surely, you will cast a light of gladness upon his onward journey, and contribute your part towards the building of that kingdom of love which links our earth to heaven.³⁹

He was overhasty in preparing this statement, for he had to wait nearly two decades for his own 'onward journey'. Nevertheless, the 'kingdom of love' was presented as the link that would connect the living to the dead and perhaps his sympathy with Syndicalism and women's suffrage to his spiritualism to which we now turn our attention.

Mrs Edith Ellis, in an essay on Carpenter, maintained that it was the mystic in him that had led him to Socialism,⁴⁰ and Carpenter dealt with mysticism in his latest work, *The Drama of Love and Death*. His main interest lay in the art of dying rather than in that of love, on which he had already written extensively. While much attention was devoted to 'the art of avoiding death', which culminated in 'so common and unworthy conspiracies between doctors, nurses, and relatives' before dying people, he declared, 'the whole of the psychology and even physiology of Death have . . . been sadly neglected'.⁴¹

He made great efforts to trace the 'psychic roots' of the animal life; he even suggested the existence of a photogenic 'spiritual body'.⁴² Perhaps the fact that many distinguished scientists of the day, such as A. R. Wallace and Sir Oliver Lodge, took part in researches into mediums and apparitions was itself a sign of the times and an excuse for Carpenter's enthusiasm for an amalgamation of the rational and the irrational in the jumble of pseudo-scientific claims and assertions.

'You have speculatively arrived at so many conclusions which I have experimentally demonstrated to be true in my own experience', wrote W. T. Stead, himself an adept in psychical research, welcoming the publication of *The Drama of Love and Death*.⁴³ In less than

four weeks, in April 1912, Stead was to go down in the *Titanic*. 'Witherwards would the author lead us?' asked Bruce Glasier in his review of the book.⁴⁴ Glasier was not happy with 'a curious comingling of erotic and spiritual sublimations' he found in it, and was especially critical of the element of sadism which he discovered in the author's treatment of the ideals of love. Carpenter's 'divine soul' and its triumph over death would seem nothing but 'a philosophical variation of the Christian teaching', and might be described as 'priest-craft writ large'. Modern occultism which involved eminent scientific investigators, Glasier added, was surely 'the Nemesis of reason, the anti-climax of unbelief!'

Carpenter did not flinch from his belief, and went on delivering speeches on 'The Inner Self' and other similar subjects. In an article on 'The Meaning of Pain', he pursued his attempt to relate the teachings of the Indian religion to 'the biological facts revealed by modern science'. It was indeed ironic that he set forth in so many words a mystic justification of pain on the eve of another great human trial, the First World War.

Finally, the tragic death of his sister Dora would explain at least part of the circumstances that led him to turn to mystical speculations in those days. Dora had ventured upon a career as a lecturer and began to struggle with the preparation of a book. Edward was 'an inspiration to the brilliant Dora', recalled her niece, Ida Hyett.⁴⁵ Dora was then living in a house at South Kensington with her sister Sophie who was already 'a little hazy in her head'.⁴⁶ In January 1912 she was in Weymouth, trying to overcome the insomnia from which she was suffering. Apparently Dora was more under the spell of her brother's ideas than under her doctor's treatment. Early in March she drowned herself in Weymouth Bay. Edward was 'rather knocked over' by her death.⁴⁷ But 'the release of the spirit from a prolonged hell was a wise step', wrote Alfred,⁴⁸ and probably Edward agreed with his brother. Did he always find in death, as he wrote in his *Drama of Love and Death*, 'a strange joy in shelling off the old husks'?

THE average life expectancy of an infantry subaltern on the Western front, wrote Robert Graves, was only three months at some stages of the European war. The prospect was at once cheerless and exhilarating. 'Death would be lying in wait for the troops next week', wrote Siegfried Sassoon, 'and now the flavour of life was doubly strong'. Thus the drama of 'love and death', about which Carpenter had speculated so much, became a grim reality with the outbreak of the war.

As it happened, Carpenter's seventieth birthday fell within a month of the British declaration of war against Germany. A committee consisting of Sir W. P. Byles, MP (the radical journalist), Lowes Dickinson, Havelock Ellis, H. W. Nevinson (the crusading journalist), Sir Sydney Olivier, Henry Salt, Isabella Ford, Olive Schreiner, with Charles Sixsmith as secretary, had prepared an address of congratulation signed by many Socialists and Labour leaders of varying shades of political opinion as well as by his personal and literary friends. 'At a time when society is confused and overburdened by its own restlessness and artificiality', it read, 'your writings have called us back to the vital facts of Nature, to the need of simplicity and calmness; of just dealing between man and man; of free and equal citizenship; of love, beauty, and humanity in our daily life'.

Carpenter's reply, which was in fact an eloquent exposition of his views on the war, began with a reference to 'the strange events of the last few weeks' which, he said, 'seem to point to the break-up all over Europe of the old framework of society and (like the Napoleonic wars of a century ago) to bear within themselves the seeds of a new

order of things'. He believed that capitalist rivalry, 'the piling up of power in the hands of mere speculators and financiers, and the actual trading for dividends in the engines of death', had led to the war, and in this respect all the nations concerned, including Britain, were responsible for it. But he placed direct responsibility upon Germany or rather Prussia with her 'mad' military vanity and her 'brutal eagerness for imperial expansion at all costs'. Among 'the more pacific peoples' of Western Europe, on the other hand, their hatred of militarism and 'bullying imperialism' brought about 'an extraordinary and astounding development of solidarity and enthusiasm' – especially in Britain where, he optimistically declared, 'a whole programme of socialist institutions' had been developed. From this enthusiasm he hoped to see a Federation of Western Democracies emerging 'on a Labour basis', while he expected 'a sturdy reaction, perhaps amounting to revolution' to take place among the Central and Eastern Powers against their own military despotism. In short, he felt the war was ringing the death-knell of 'sordid and self-seeking Commercialism'.¹

Was the war to be tolerated or even welcomed as a progressive element in social evolution? Already in September, the fighting on the Western Front showed the signs of settling down to trench warfare. In a note on the war written about this time, Carpenter expressed a millenarian hope for the end, not necessarily of the war, which was after all generally regarded as likely to be of a short duration, but of 'our commercial civilisation', which was a 'disease'.² 'Nothing but the general abandonment of the system of living on the labour of others will avail. *There is no other way.* This, whether as between individuals or as between nations, is – and has been since the beginning of the world – the root-cause of the war.'³ He thus shared the orthodox Socialist view of the war.

Carpenter had also some constructive plans to suggest; in an article entitled 'The Healing of Nations', he expounded the idea of 'a United States of Europe' including a remodelled Germany and a reformed Austria, and advocated 'a recognition of *racial* rights' or what was soon to be called the principle of national self-determination.⁴ His friend, Lowes Dickinson, was conducting a campaign to propagate the idea of a League of Nations, which, being more practical than Carpenter's proposal, was taken up by many influential

people and had an important bearing on the future course of international politics.

Another potent campaign against the war was that of the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) which had come into existence under the leadership of E. D. Morel. Morel had brought to a successful conclusion his Congo reform campaign and was setting himself up as the chief inspiration of the movement for the settlement of disputes by international arbitration and conciliation.⁵ In January 1915 he wrote to Carpenter, suggesting that the latter might write an imaginary epic of 'the Christmas fraternal greetings amongst troops in the field being prolonged beyond Christmas and embracing all the soldiers engaged, thus bringing the war to an end, to the great dilemma and discomfort of the diplomatists'.⁶ It appears that Carpenter felt unable to comply: he may have found the idea too frivolous or too late. Carpenter for his part had his name accepted as a volunteer for 'a travelling field hospital' and contemplated the possibility of going to France with George Merrill to help in such a hospital.⁷

From part of Carpenter's diaries that have survived, we can obtain glimpses of his war-time activities. On 7 January 1915 he returned (apparently from London) to Sheffield, where he stayed overnight with his friend in the city, and saw '7 or 8 khaki men in the evening, [they said] "Not fighting, it's Murder"'. On the 13th he went to London; George Merrill followed him. On the 21st he attended a committee meeting of the Humanitarian League, and also a meeting of the British Society for the Study of Sex-Psychology (BSSP). On the 30th he signed an agreement with Allen for his war book, *The Healing of Nations*, and saw Margaret Sanger, the American advocate of birth control, at the British Museum. On 22nd February he returned to Sheffield, and heard of a 'Zeppelin Scare at Brown's'. On 30 March his war book came out - '1200 copies already subscribed!'⁸

Earlier in the same month E. B. Lloyd wrote from London, saying that some topical question such as 'Soldiers & Sex trouble' would be dealt with at a meeting of the BSSP.⁹ On 29 April Carpenter attended the quarterly members' meeting of the BSSP, where he met E. M. Forster, and heard Lloyd speaking 'to the point'.

Lloyd assisted in organising the 'Conference upon Pacific Philosophy of Life' which was held in Caxton Hall in July 1915. Bertrand Russell, the Cambridge mathematician and philosopher, who had formed a branch of the UDC among the dons, opened the first session with a speech on the philosophy of pacifism. Carpenter's address on 'War and Peace in Human History: A Backward and a Forward Glance' attracted 'the largest attendance' according to a report: 'Mr. Carpenter thinks that it [war] was a necessary part in the formation of civilisation. Like Rudolf Eucken, he thinks that men have to pass through the negative state of defence and destruction before they can really achieve the positive state of peace and construction.'¹⁰ Herbert Burrows, the Social Democrat who had resigned from Hyndman's party protesting against a resolution in favour of armaments, opened a session on pacifism and evolution. J. A. Hobson spoke on 'Equality of Opportunity and Freedom of Exchange' as necessary factors in social development on a pacifist basis. The formation of a 'League of Peace and Freedom' was proposed, but apparently very little came of it.

Back at Millthorpe Carpenter received a letter from Romain Rolland, in which the eminent Frenchman remarked that he could agree with Carpenter on almost all points in his *Healing of Nations* except on the question of voluntary recruitment, for he would rather see 'equality of sacrifice' among the Allied nations.¹¹ Carpenter was not convinced and told him so in a reply. On 12 October he went to London again, and spent that evening at 'Wolf's' (Lloyd's) in Parkhill Road - 'Zepp raid visible from window'.¹²

In June 1915, Lloyd informed Carpenter that Fenner Brockway would shortly send him circulars from the 'No Conscription Fellowship'.¹³ Brockway, the young editor of the *Labour Leader*, had started the movement of resistance to conscription as early as November 1914. It was largely a youth movement, for the older leaders of the pacifist ILP tended to dismiss the problem of conscription as remote and somewhat unreal. In the autumn of 1915, however, it became a lively political issue, as thousands of 'slackers' were generally believed to be ignoring Kitchener's patriotic call to arms. Carpenter soon found himself in the thick of the controversy on voluntarism or compulsion. In an article entitled 'Conscription and National Service' published in the *Daily Chronicle* (12 August

1915), he proposed a 'Plan of Self-Compulsion' or a Socialist voluntarism. He thought it splendid that there had been a 'remarkable response to the call for defence of the Motherland', which he explained in terms of the great inspiration created by the idea of defence. (Altogether over two and a half million men were to enlist before the system of voluntary recruitment came to an end in the early spring of 1916). Conscription, on the other hand, was inimical to 'the genius of our people' as well as 'intolerable to our sense of Freedom and . . . our Christian sentiment'; it would entail industrial conscription and 'Prussianising all round'. In order to resist the pressure for conscription, he now proposed that everybody should accept the duty to perform some useful work on the condition that each person would retain a 'free choice' as to what his particular activity should be. The evasion of such duty had been the bane of the modern commercial order. Thus, he concluded, the call for national service, if rightly understood, should lead to the regeneration of our social system.

Carpenter was not a 'stop-the-war' pacifist; his 'pacifism' was not simply Christian humanist or class-war revolutionary; it was even patriotic, for he wanted 'a peace that would be worthy of the men who had laid down their lives on the battlefield', as he declared amidst a great applause in a speech on 'War and Peace'.¹⁴ Thus his 'pacifism', if it was pacifism at all, was very complex. Gilbert Murray, the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford and an advocate of the cause of foreign exiles and also of the conscientious objectors, found Carpenter's *Healing of Nations* disappointing because the book did not say what should be done to avoid war apart from the panacea of a general abandonment of the system of living on the labour of others. He was probably right when he deplored what he called 'a deliberate confusion of standards'; in particular he objected to the following passage in Carpenter's book: 'The brutality and atrocity of modern war is but the reflection of the brutality and inhumanity of our commercial regime and ideals. The slaughter of the battlefields may be more obvious, but it is less deliberate, and it is doubtful whether it be really worse, than the daily and yearly slaughter of the railways, the mines, and the workshops.'¹⁵ Yet Carpenter was not alone in asserting the hellish nature of capitalist peace. Harry Quelch, the working-class Socialist, who died shortly before the war, had

written: 'The proletariat, my class, are the victim in either peace or war. War, undoubtedly, is "hell" for them; but is peace . . . going to be so much better?'¹⁶ Carpenter was opposed to capitalist war as he had been to capitalist civilisation, while believing that war should be made the occasion for the preparation of Socialism. If there was no compulsion, war would become a people's war for the people, which would mean greater efforts at defence and social regeneration.

A 'National Convention' of the No Conscription Fellowship was held in November in the Library of the Memorial Hall, London, under the chairmanship of Clifford Allen. It was a rally of the men of enlistment age who were opposed to the introduction of conscription and who resolved to proclaim their intention 'whatever the penalty may be'. Carpenter's letter, the first message read at the Convention, dealt with the grounds for the moral objection to conscription. 'If there is anything which we all, I think, believe in', he wrote:

it is that every man (or woman) should be free to act according to the dictates of his or her conscience. . . . To compel those to fight who think it wrong to do so - to force them to murder not only their brothers, but their own consciences as well - is wicked beyond words. Conscription in that sense is an attempt to break down the most precious element in a nation's life - its loyalty to what it thinks right. And no diplomatic gain, no mere extension of empire or acquisition of new markets, can make up for that.¹⁷

The fate of the voluntary system, however, was sealed by military developments late in 1915, when the failure of the Gallipoli campaign led to the acceptance of the strategy of using every available man to break the enemy's lines in France. In January 1916 the Military Service Bill became law and imposed conscription on unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one. Compulsory military service soon became universal and in 1918 the age limit was raised to fifty. The war had at last assumed the form of compulsion which Carpenter had so vehemently denounced: more unreservedly had he become an opponent of the war.

In January 1916 Carpenter was in London, speaking at the South Place Institute on 'Rest' and the 'absurdity of speeding up'.¹⁸ On 16 March he 'spoke . . . for the U.D.C. in Sheffield with C. P. Trevelyan; and 2 or 3 weeks earlier with Ramsay MacDonald, but the wretched S.D.T. [*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*] didn't report

either!’¹⁹ From London Lloyd wrote him about the plight of conscientious objectors:

It’s a funny feeling being a ‘deserter’ in this respectable life & country – never knowing whether the Blue coat boys will nab you at a meeting or at work, or even in your own home. . . . Some of my friends from Surbiton have been collared already, & have disappeared into the maw of the military moloch. Others are expecting to follow at any moment. In view of all this it’s but little worth while to bother about one’s own ‘exemption’.²⁰

The act allowed ‘exemption’ on conscientious grounds either in the form of freedom from combatant service only or conditional on the applicant being engaged in some work of national importance. Lloyd was appointed assistant master at Alfred’s School in Hampstead, supposedly a position of ‘national importance’.

In a letter to Carpenter Lloyd showed anxiety about ‘the death sentences on CO’s in France’.²¹ Conscientious objectors serving in France as members of the Non-Combatant Corps were often driven into acts of resistance to military law. Gilbert Murray interceded with the Prime Minister on behalf of thirty-four COs in France, some of whom had been sentenced to death. In fact, no death sentences were carried out; this is indeed remarkable, considering the fact that nearly six thousand COs were handed over to the military authorities.²²

But the rebels in Ireland suffered a worse fate. On Easter Monday that year, a rising of the Irish volunteers and Citizen Army took place in Dublin: it was not suppressed until after four days’ fighting, and the establishment of a provisional government of the Irish Republic in the General Post Office. Then followed the execution of fifteen of its leaders, including James Connolly, the Socialist who had been wounded in the battle. Sir Roger Casement, formerly a British consular official, had been arrested near the coast of County Kerry. He had been in Germany as the accredited envoy of the Irish rebels and had persuaded the Germans to have him smuggled into Ireland with arms for the rebels. He hazarded the voyage on a U-boat as he was anxious to return in time to dissuade the leaders from setting off a premature rebellion: he knew that the German help, if it arrived, would be insufficient. His trial began at the Old Bailey on 26 June:

he was convicted of high treason and sentenced to death. After the trial, part of his diaries showing him to be a homosexual of a promiscuous nature were circulated to discourage sympathy among those who were pleading with the government for a reprieve. Apparently Carpenter helped to collect signatures for an 'Appeal' for Casement, and wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on his behalf. Charles Roden Buxton wrote to him on 5 July 1916:

We [Buxton and his wife] read your 'Appeal' together last night and we are very much impressed with the great good it may do. It is a great thing that we have someone like you among us, who will point straight to the real human factors in the case, and draw the right moral in a way that people cannot help reading.²³

Carpenter was in touch with H. W. Nevinson, also a supporter of rebellious causes, who had known Casement for many years and had now made a protest against an attempt to circulate rumours of Casement's immorality. But all their efforts were of no avail. On 3 August, an entry in Carpenter's diary simply read: 'Roger Casement hanged!' Casement thus became the sixteenth war-time martyr of the Irish cause.

Between the Easter Rising and the execution of Casement, took place the battle of the Somme. On 1 July thirteen British battalions launched an attack on the enemy lines and suffered the crippling loss of 19,000 killed and twice as many wounded or missing in one day. A fortnight earlier, Carpenter was in the hut at Millthorpe where he had written *Towards Democracy*, writing a war poem called 'Never Again'. He wrote as though he had foreseen death hovering over the scarred battlefield of Flanders. In *The Healing of Nations* he had condemned the war as part and parcel of 'Civilisation'; now after two years' bloodshed and sorrows, he protested against the war as such. 'That human beings should use every devilish invention of science with the one purpose of maiming, blinding, destroying those against whom they have no personal grudge or grievance; all this is sheer madness.'

By the five or six million actual combatants already slain; and the strange spectacle of millions of *Women* . . . manufacturing *man*-destroying explosive shells in ceaseless stream by day and night . . .

By the terrified faces – as of drowning men – of those suffering in countless hospitals from shell-shock; by their trembling hands and limbs and horrible dreams at night – pursued by an ever-living horror;

By the curses of the tender-hearted friend who collects in No-man's land between the lines the scattered fragments of his comrade's body – the dabs of flesh, the hand, the head he knows so well, a boot with a foot in it – and puts them all together in a sack for burial;

By the silent stupefaction of wives and mothers trying vainly to picture to themselves a death which cannot be pictured; by the insane laughter of those who having witnessed these things can no longer weep;

This must not be again!

The war, he now declared, must cease at once. The longer it went on, the less heroic and generous it would become and the more it would be dominated by hatred and revenge. Without mentioning the UDC, he endorsed its policy. He praised 'the blossom of International solidarity and federation' of Humanity and Labour which was 'taking shape already', perhaps a faint echo of Zimmerwald, though his friend, Bruce Glasier, had been refused a passport to attend an international conference which was held there to explore the Socialist road to peace. 'I do honour and respect the genuine conscientious objectors . . . very sincerely', continued Carpenter: they would 'inaugurate a world-era of Peace' by opposing compulsory military service.

Carpenter's *Never Again!* was 'a cry of the heart, a stirring protest, the prose of which is so admirable that it resembles a dazzling poem', read a letter from Madame Reclus who had escaped from Brussels with her husband and was staying in a small town in the Dordogne.²⁴ Not many people, however, shared his optimism; even some of his old friends became sour and cynical. 'I have read "Never Again!" with admiration & entire sympathy', wrote Havelock Ellis: 'Still I do not feel altogether sanguine about the future. "Never again!" sounds so much like that "Never no more!" which I have so often heard women exclaim when in the midst of having a baby'.²⁵

Perhaps Carpenter was not in a hurry; he knew that the process of evolution was slow even with respect to war. He calmly recorded another Zeppelin raid on Sheffield: '25 September 1916. . . Warning drummers at 11 p.m. Zepps at 12.30. 12-15 bombs, hellish. Noise & flashes. Everybody up till 3.0.'²⁶

Across the Channel, beyond the undulating hills of northern France, in the trenches opposite to Memetz, Siegfried Sassoon had made up his mind to die 'because in the circumstances there didn't seem anything else to be done'.²⁷ Many of the junior officers in the great volunteer force were former public-school boys like Sassoon himself or his friend Robert Graves. On 1 July, the day of the Somme onslaught, Sassoon was 'staring at a sunlit picture of Hell'. He survived, and even won a Military Cross, but succumbed to fever and was sent home to recuperate. Robert Graves was wounded and sent home. They were soon back in the trenches, but Graves suffered lung troubles, and was sent home again, while Sassoon was seriously wounded in the battle for the Hindenburg line. His second experience of the trench-warfare in France altered his outlook on the war. Back home, he decided to take independent action. He came under the influence of the pacifists who gathered around Philip and Lady Ottoline Morrell at their manor house at Carsington near Oxford. 'Markington, the editor of the *Unconservative Weekly*' (apparently Massingham of the *Nation*) told him that British war aims were acquisitive – they were fighting for Mesopotamian oil – and 'Thornton Tyrrell' of Bloomsbury, an eminent mathematician and philosopher, who had been dismissed from Cambridge because of his anti-war activities (undoubtedly Bertrand Russell), gave him advice and introduced him to his colleagues on the 'Stop the War Committee' (UDC) and the No Conscription Fellowship.²⁸

A veteran of his old battalion wrote to Sassoon from France: 'Men are beginning to ask for what they are fighting'. He now asked the same question for himself. Early in July 1917 he gave 'an ultimatum' to his commanding officer at the Royal Welch Fusiliers Depot and sent a copy of his statement on the war to his friends including Carpenter:

I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them, and that, had this been done the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation. . . I am not protesting against the conduct of the

war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.²⁹

Carpenter, much impressed with this daring act of his young acquaintance, at once sent him an encouraging letter. Robert Graves, however, was angry with the pacifists who had encouraged Sassoon to take this action. 'Nobody would follow his example, either in England or in Germany', he wrote: 'The war would inevitably go on and on until one side or the other cracked. . . He should not be allowed to become a martyr to a hopeless cause in his present physical condition.'³⁰ Graves met him and persuaded him to agree to appear before a Medical Board. There it was decided that he was suffering from shell-shock. Sassoon consented, as he explained in a letter to Carpenter, 'because I should otherwise have been sent to a proper lunatic place'.³¹

Carpenter sent to Sassoon a copy of satire on the war that he had published, entitled *Three Ballads*. The first ballad was about the conscientious objectors seen through the eyes of a militarist who called them the 'Nonsensical Conjectors'. The second dealt with the case of 'Lieutenant Tattoon, M.C.' (i.e. Sassoon):

And no one knew whatever on Earth
 Our present objective and aim were,
 And whether the loss and deadly dearth of another Million
 of lives was worth
 Some gains in Mesopotamia.
 These were the thoughts of Lieutenant Tattoon. –
 Of course it was very improper,
 But he actually gave them *expression*, and
 Found out he was trying to jump the Moon
 And only coming a cropper.

The third ballad was about a futile intrigue between 'the Bodkin and the Muskett' to break Morel who had been sent to prison for violating the Defence of the Realm Act.

As Graves observed, Sassoon's idealism changed direction: at first he had been a happy warrior; later he became a convinced pacifist.³² In due time he became literary editor of the *Daily Herald*, the former trade-union strike sheet, which played a major role in the post-war years of labour unrest.

Carpenter was interested in the fate of the common people in the army and was glad to obtain an insight into their life through some of his personal friends. Sergeant Wilfred Walter, who served with a sanitary section of the British Expeditionary Force, wrote to him from France:

We have to carry out all sorts of drainage schemes with fatigue parties drawn from the various regiments, & keep things clean generally. . . . Each day a different regiment. Sharp humorous cockneys one day, superb big grousing Highlanders the next, (a didna join the army to be turned into a fuckin' navy) – then some sweet spoken lads from the Western Counties, or some burly miners who revelled in our jobs & wanted to come on again next day – or some of the gentlemen of the earth clean willing gentle lads from the East County farm lands. Lord! how you would have loved it all.³³

Captain Sydney Lomer of Chesterfield and his servant George N. were sent together to France. Lomer fell ill and was sent home, protesting against 'a strict regulation forbidding servants to accompany their masters to England': 'it really would be a tragedy if he [George] were left behind'.³⁴ Carpenter observed their movements and appreciated their frank confessions of personal feelings.

There was yet another George among Carpenter's friends, George Clemas, a board school teacher of Chertsey, who was serving in the King's Royal Rifles at Winchester. 'I enjoy the constant companionship, by day and by night. There is a splendid spirit of comradeship prevailing among the men here', he wrote from the Rifle Depot.³⁵ He had learned a great deal from Carpenter's writings on sex, but he did not care 'a straw' for the latter's Socialist views. Carpenter had earlier written to him about 'a great Cause, whether of War or Peace' that would deliver the individual into 'a bigger life'.³⁶ Clemas was not impressed. He remained cynical as to 'causes', and this drove Carpenter into a rage which was indeed rare with him:

About 'Causes' I don't agree with you a bit – and I don't think the difference is due to your Youth or my Age, but to something quite of another nature! It may be true that some causes are trivial or faddy – but you cannot really think that of say Army Reform, or No-Conscription, or the great Industrial question now looming up, or of Education. . . . Yet I never

heard of you lifting a little finger to help in these or kindred matters. Of course people can't exactly jump out of their own skins; and I know that with you perhaps the chief object in life is to get the love of others. Good! – couldn't be better in a way. But it is curious (perhaps a sort of 'Compensation') that love flows most naturally to those who give their lives in helping others, and is rather liable to pass by people who are absorbed in their own little comforts & conveniences.³⁷

Clemas began to repent, and apparently did his best to conform to his mentor's wishes.

Not long after the battle of the Somme, Lloyd George was reported to have spoken of 'fighting to a finish and a knock-out'. Carpenter, in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* (9 October 1916), protested against such a 'wild threat' that would strengthen the German government by rallying the people to its support and would consequently prolong the war. Early in 1917 he commented on 'our ill-fated expedition to Gallipoli' which he linked with the series of Trojan wars, and supported the idea of the internationalisation of the Straits, one of the items included in President Wilson's Fourteen Points.³⁸

Russia, one of the chief contestants in the struggle, began to withdraw from the conflict. Shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution, Carpenter received a letter from Hyndman, now leader of the pro-war Marxist party that had seceded from the internationalist British Socialist Party: 'What a period you & I have lived into! . . . For that we are already in the early stages of the social revolution is, it seems to me obvious. Lucky indeed shall we be if we are spared a hideous cataclysm as bad as, or worse than, that which has already begun in Russia'.³⁹ By this time the shop-stewards movement had developed into a serious force in the centres of the munition industry, especially on the Clydeside, where its leaders had been arrested and deported for disaffection. A convention had been held in Leeds, attended by shop stewards as well as a variety of other Socialists, to emulate the Russians. Meanwhile, an international conference scheduled to be held at Stockholm became a symbol of Socialist opposition to the war. Furthermore, the Bolsheviks upon their seizure of power concluded an armistice with the Germans, and proposed negotiations for a general peace. When their government signed the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Carpenter's sympathy with Russia grew further. The

Russians, he wrote, 'pitted against the power of the Sword the power of an Idea', and Russia was 'at the beginning of a great career'. She at last betrayed the nature of the war not only in Central Europe but among all the peoples involved: it was, in short, 'a conflict (within each nation) between the rising democracy and the old feudal regime'.⁴⁰

A new book by Carpenter entitled *Towards Industrial Freedom* came out in October 1917: it was a collection of articles mostly written before the war. In an introductory essay he predicted the end of 'the Shop-keeping Age' which would come as a result of the 'bankruptcy' that hung over the European nations in the war, and the emergence of 'a new spirit of social and industrial life', that of 'mutual help and equality', which would permeate various institutions.

The outcome of the war was still in the balance. The case of Lieutenant Sassoon had convinced Carpenter that the individual soldier could not bring the fighting to an end. Only large-scale public pressure, probably involving the Labour movement in each country, could force the politicians to stop it. 'And I felt despondent about it till quite the end of 1917, when I first attended the Labour Congress (War Aims) in London, and for the first time heard (though I may not have agreed with all that was said) dignified, strong, and really sensible utterances on the political situation', he wrote at the time: '*Labour must take the lead*. It must push forward firmly and decisively – as it is already beginning to do – towards the calling of an international Conference in Stockholm, Switzerland, or elsewhere for the purpose of discussing the whole situation, and from the civilian point of view.' He felt that the Labour parties of various countries might work out a programme for the creation of a 'United States of Europe' – 'they will certainly discuss the international industrial future'. He observed that a new climate of opinion had arisen which would favour the formation of a Labour Government. 'If – as seems probable – a Labour Government can be established in England without serious discord or civil strife, a long step will have been made towards the same thing in other lands and towards the avoidance of needless bloodshed among people more prone to violent revolution than ourselves.'⁴¹ On that point Carpenter was not much

at variance with Hyndman, the Socialist 'John Bull', with whom he was now on friendly terms.

Indeed, the hostility of the government and the 'patriotic' seamen between them had baffled an attempt to send envoys to Stockholm, but the Labour movement as a whole had come round to support the cause of a negotiated peace under the leadership of Arthur Henderson, who had been badly treated by the government of which he was a member. He and Sidney Webb prepared a new constitution of the Labour Party, the object of which was not only to unite the Socialist and trade union elements but also to provide membership for the middle-class people and women. The enfranchisement of nearly all men and many women which was effected about the same time was to provide a greatly enlarged electorate for the new Labour Party, which now emerged as a truly independent political force.

In 1918 E. M. Forster was in Egypt, serving with the International Red Cross, and stationed near Alexandria. 'I really believe you don't want to come home, now', Carpenter wrote to Forster in March:

George & I are home again, after 2 horrible months in London – the dirt, the fogs, the darkness, the illnesses of people and the Air-raids – and are carrying on as usual. The crocuses & snowdrops are over and the daffies are coming on – and some days are really beautiful; but the shadow of this unholy war rests on everything; our friends are far away, and if they get home for a few days are snatched away to the edge & threat of perdition. To go on with writing (my usual solace) is difficult, for every day brings hundreds of cries for help from all sides. . . I saw Goldie Dickinson in London – sweet & good as ever, but looking aged & somewhat weary. We both send love & long to see you again. And I send love to your friend (whether he wants it or not!)⁴²

In July Carpenter called on his nephew, Captain Alfred Francis Carpenter at the Admiralty. Francis was a national hero for his exploit as commander of HMS *Vindictive*, a cruiser filled with concrete, which was sunk, leading a flotilla of obsolete vessels, at the mouth of the Zeebrugge canal to block the U-Boat base there. George Hyett, another of his nephews, wrote him about the Zeebrugge hero whom he had gone to see at Dover and about his 'sad task' of writing to some twenty marines, who did not return with the Battalion.⁴³

At last the end of the war arrived. 'Armistice signed at 5 a.m. Fighting ceased at 11.0', wrote Carpenter in his diary for 11 November 1918. 'One does not know whether to laugh or to cry!' he told Alfred Mattison, 'but anyhow we are thankful. (We want a *red* flag badly, but there isn't even a petticoat in the house!). . . 11 November & the bells ringing!'⁴⁴ Entries in his diary for that December were few, and he recorded virtually nothing about the general election, that was already taking place. Somehow the war and the victory appeared to have brought his millenarian hopes nearer to the goal of realisation. Yet Carpenter found himself at the end of the war as much interested in the problem of sex and Socialism as he had been at its beginning. He tackled these problems again, though perhaps with an increasing degree of detachment, in the years of 'reconstruction' after the war.

SIXTEEN

LAST YEARS

ON 19 July the Peace was officially concluded. Carpenter with George Merrill and another friend went to Hyde Park. 'Enormous crowd - rain. Singing - sea of umbrellas. Sat in Pub & drank Vermouth & Beer', he wrote in his diary. In the evening, he and George 'rumbled thro' the streets . . . thro' an orgy of fireworks, dancing & mouth-organs!'¹

The first year of peace was also a year of widespread labour unrest. One day during the Easter week, thirty-five miners and their wives called at Millthorpe: sitting outside around their host, they 'talked Miners' politics and Bolshevism'.² 'A really interesting talk with *them*', he wrote to Clemas, '- nice fellows mostly, only of course no chance to get on closer terms with any of them . . . I think the Miners' Conference at Southport has shown up splendidly.'³ The Miners Federation, at its conference at Southport in January, had ushered in the post-war period of industrial militancy by demanding not only higher wages and reduced hours of work but also nationalisation of the mines. The miners had earlier threatened a strike, and Lloyd George, by agreeing to set up a committee to consider their demands, the Sankey Commission, diverted their energies temporarily to what has been called 'a completely barren political campaign'.⁴ In the summer even the police struck, and a serious situation developed on Merseyside as a result. Then the railwaymen staged a national strike in September.

Carpenter was often seen at the *Herald* office in London: he was now writing occasional articles for this paper. He complained that

post-war Labour failed to see the importance of the land question, and advocated that 'the fields and farms and moorlands and commons and forests' must come into the people's hands. The trade unions and other similar bodies should acquire large tracts of land and create co-operative land-colonies or 'Industrial villages'.⁵ For the industrial world as a whole he advocated a programme of Guild Socialism and suggested 'a standing Trades Congress or Parliament' to adjust narrow trade interests.⁶ He was in favour of a miners' guild, and thought that the principle of the industrial guild should be extended to the organisation of the police and even of the army. Thus he spoke of 'a police guild in direct touch with the other industrial guilds over the country, and the central government (in the distance) holding a "watchful brief" in the interests of the general public', and of 'a democratically-formed Military Guild' which 'would refuse to lend itself to the creation of a Jingo Empire'.⁷

The Allied intervention in Russia began in July 1918 ostensibly to revive the Eastern front, but after the end of the war it became a military operation, supplied with surplus munition of war, to support the White Russians and the anti-Bolshevist armies that had sprung up in Russia. The Labour movement as a whole was opposed to intervention: direct action to stop British intervention was discussed at the Labour Party conference of 1919, and later in the year a national 'Hands Off Russia' committee was set up. Carpenter followed the development of the campaign at close quarters. 'The Capitalist & Landlord interests in this country & in France', he wrote at the time, 'fear a downright Soviet republic more than they fear – or once feared – the Junkers of Prussia and the Hohenzollerns. They are in mortal terror lest a new order of society should come into being, in which Rent and Interest should give place to equal co-operation among the workers'.⁸ He also regretted that 'the Bolshevik Bogey' which was rampant even among the intellectuals, was discouraging attempts at *rapprochement* with Russia.

Nearly a million men from the United Kingdom and the Empire perished in the war; casualties were especially heavy among junior officers, and the sense of loss led to a widely-felt concern about the 'lost generation'. Carpenter was too old to be directly involved in

this sorrow. Yet his was a generation that was also fast disappearing. His eldest sister Sophie died in January 1916. Edward Anthony Beck, Master of Trinity Hall since 1902, who had once shared Carpenter's youthful aspirations, passed away in April of the same year. Shortly afterwards, Carpenter's autobiography, *My Days and Dreams*, came out, and was hailed by a friend as 'an evidence of the possibility of living beyond seventy and yet remaining in the van of freedom's army'.⁹ It was a portrait of himself surrounded by a host of friends, some famous and some obscure, all active or once active in this 'freedom's army'.

There were casualties even in this army. Edith Ellis, who had been prominent in the New Fellowship and had done some useful work in the field of sex psychology, was soon to die tragically. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, she went to the United States to deliver a course of lectures. 'Her Milwaukee lecture on E.C. seems to have been very well attended', wrote her husband to Carpenter.¹⁰ While in America, she fell ill with blood-poisoning, and returned to England in a state of exhaustion after a hazardous and trying voyage in an American ship full of passengers alarmed by the news of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. On her return, in spite of her poor health, she prepared an ambitious plan for giving some forty lectures and readings on Eugenics. Her health finally gave way. She received a treatment at a nursing home in Cornwall, recovered a little and returned to London. Unfortunately she became morbidly suspicious of her husband and even secured a deed of legal separation from him which, she felt, would prevent him from putting her in a lunatic asylum. Her end soon came. One cold night in September 1916 Edith caught a fatal chill while standing on the door-step watching a Zeppelin raid and 'taking off her coat to put onto someone who was thinly clad'. 'I had been in the country for a day or two', wrote Havelock Ellis to Carpenter, '& on my return she never recognised me. The nurse told me that the last conscious thing she seemed to do was to point to your photo & my photo, though exactly what she meant was not clear. Although long separated, it still came as a crushing blow.'¹¹ 'Her last thoughts were evidently of her early friends, & her last conscious words "Lily! Lily!"', added Ellis.¹² Edith had adored an amateur painter called Lily, who had been dead for over ten years. Carpenter gave a paper of reminiscences at an

'Edith Fellowship' meeting, and wrote a preface to her posthumous work, *The New Horizon in Love and Life* (1921).

Carpenter found Havelock Ellis 'thin and suffering',¹³ but the sorrows of bereavement overwhelmed Carpenter himself when George Hukin died on 22 March 1917. 'Mrs. Nichols stayed with Fannie all night. G. restless & wandering, but ate a fair breakfast at 9.0. Then relapsed & sank away about 10.0. I arrived about 10.30, but too late. G.M. [Merrill] was there by 10.0 but G.H. unconscious. And that was the end. Fannie & Mrs. Nichols laid him out', reads an entry in his diary. The following day 'G.M. went up again early. I stayed at home - suffered with the thoughts of 30 years. G.M. weeping half the night'.¹⁴ Hukin's death was a hard blow to Carpenter, and he spent the following few days looking over the bundle of his old letters to his dead friend.

Then in February 1919 Kate Salt died at Lyme Regis. She and her husband had spent several years in a cottage at Holmesfield which they had sold only recently. 'Perhaps the hardest thing about death is that we cannot even *know*', her husband wrote to Carpenter shortly after her death: 'we are left without any instructions at all - free to choose between two seeming absurdities; one, that a personality should be snuffed out, as you say, like a candle; the other, that innumerable separate existence should be indefinitely continued!'¹⁵

With Hardie and Quelch both dead, Bruce Glasier was in fact 'the last British custodian of the spirit of the International'.¹⁶ But this spirit was curbed and stunted in the war, and Glasier himself apparently developed an ulcer and turned for a while to Christian Science. Early in 1919 Carpenter visited him at his residence at Levenshulme, a Manchester suburb, and noticed a 'change in [his] inner nature' from that of a 'hard and horny secularist'.¹⁷ They spent long hours together, talking about philosophy and religion, and Glasier 'found himself in very close accord with Carpenter in his views upon life's mysteries, hopes, and fears'.¹⁸ Stricken with his fatal illness, Glasier still had the strength to study and review *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, Carpenter's last serious work as the high priest of the World Religion. Through the maze of historical mysticism presented in the book, Glasier felt, he arrived at the core of Carpenter's Socialism which he now defined as 'the inward craving and impulse in the heart of each of us towards reconciliation and harmony with our

fellows, with society – the identification of the self-interest of each with the common interest of all'. This was published in the *Labour Leader* of 6 May 1920, and he died the following day.

One day in February 1920, Carpenter paid a visit to Olive Schreiner who was staying in London. He brought her a copy of *Pagan and Christian Creeds*. 'Olive *talking* incessant', he noted in his diary.¹⁹ Back in the Cape, Olive died alone in December of the same year. 'Poor Mrs. Schreiner', wrote Ida Hyett, Carpenter's niece, to her uncle: 'This conventional exclamation rises irresistibly to my lips, for I think she was the most tragic personality I knew, an epitome of the tragedy of the age which, thank heaven!, we are leaving behind. You will feel sad at her loss, though it means strangely little to the world to-day – strangely because of all the power there was there pent-up and unused.'²⁰ Olive's husband, from whom she had drifted away many years before, wrote to Carpenter about the grave to be built on the mountain top in his old farm 'where Olive, our baby, her dog & I are to be buried'.²¹

For his age, Carpenter remained active and even robust. In January 1920 he gave a series of lectures in London, on 'Rest' and on 'Art and Beauty'. In March he was at Millthorpe, bathed in the stream on a sunny day, and sowed seeds in the garden. With a friend called 'Ted', he walked twenty miles a day from Haddon Hall to Castleton, and the following day he walked back from Grindleford, crossing the moor at an angle.²²

He had advised George Clemas to take advantage of the Government University Scheme for war veterans. Clemas soon found himself studying at Cambridge, and Carpenter sent him a cheque as a contribution to his expenses. Carpenter spent a summer holiday with Clemas and one or two other companions in the West Country; he apparently enjoyed himself immensely on a deserted beach, 'alternately splashing in the waves, & frying in the sun under a huge boulder – no clothes for 3 or 4 hours!'²³ Shortly afterwards he wrote an article for the benefit of a group of Oxford 'revolutionaries', commending nudity as an antidote against 'over-civilisation'. 'As to the naked body, *it is never seen*', he declared.²⁴ These were indeed the innocent cries of the 'Noble Savage' in his old age.

Early in 1922, Carpenter was searching for a house for himself

and George Merrill in the warmer climate of southern England. According to 'Bob' Muirhead, 'the strongest link that bound him to the North' was broken by the death of George Hukin.²⁵ The North meant Sheffield and its razor-grinding workshops. Hukin embodied Sheffield where Carpenter had found his love and his personal salvation. In part four of *Towards Democracy* he described his Sheffield and his Hukin: 'The drum that brings the power from the engine-room pounds and thumps, the belting slaps and crackles, whizz go the wheels so steady in their sockets, and the streams of sparks fly rustling'. From the dingy den emerged 'something so finished, so subtly perfect' – a brilliant razor 'with swift invisible edge running true from heel to point' and also

Emerges (his work done) a figure with dusty cap and light
 curls escaping from under it, large dove-grey eyes and Dutch-
 featured face of tears and laughter,
 (So subtle, so rare, so finished a product),
 A man who understands and accepts all human life and character,
 Keen and swift of brain, heart tender and true, and low voice
 ringing clear,
 And my dear comrade.²⁶

And that comrade was no more.

George Merrill replaced him, but he was not the same as Hukin. He was after all a 'man-servant'. In fact, he had to be registered as a 'male servant', for the licence of whom his 'employer' paid fifteen shillings for one year.²⁷ To him, however, Carpenter was an indulgent father as well as a loving comrade. Sixsmith was of the opinion that it was largely to satisfy George's fancy for the life of the town that Carpenter decided to leave his home at Millthorpe where he was quite happy. 'He had discussed with me his plans for the future of his home', wrote Sixsmith, 'and expressed his wish to be buried, coffinless, in his orchard.'²⁸ But George exerted more and more influence upon him as he grew older. Just then, as it happened, someone offered to buy the old house and to preserve it as a memorial.

Thus in the summer of 1922 Carpenter and Merrill migrated south and settled at Mountside Road, Guildford, in a villa on a hill overlooking the town, and they named this place 'Millthorpe'. The new house 'is charming, & the people are friendly', Carpenter wrote to Mattison.²⁹ Yet according to Sixsmith 'he never seemed to me at

home in his Guildford villa'.³⁰ From the beginning there was a third person in the *ménage*, 'Ted' or Edward Inigan, about whom we know very little apart from the fact that he came from Wigan, was Carpenter's personal assistant and companion all this time, and later wrote a brief account of his master's last years.³¹ For some reason George Merrill was less happy at Guildford than in the North. He was often found drunk and incapable in the front garden. He may have felt that he was less wanted than before.

The era of Ramsay MacDonald's leadership of the Labour Party was just beginning. At the time of 'Black Friday' when the miners resisting wage reductions failed to win the support of their partners in the Triple Alliance, Carpenter wrote to MacDonald, then editor of the *Socialist Review*, regretting the fact that 'the general Labour movement is rent with jealousies & dissensions'.³² He also sent a letter to the *Daily News* in support of the Miners' demands:

The rank and file pitman . . . has the element of the problem embodied in his own experience, and so is really nearer to its solution than many a learned professor. . . Indeed, I admire greatly not only the courage displayed in the facing of inevitable privation and want of employment for a great common cause, but also the clear sight and apprehension of the cause itself, which have led so large a body of men to stand together in defence of the idea of a national pool.³³

It so happened that Carpenter's eightieth birthday fell in the brief but historical period of the first Labour government led by MacDonald. In June 1924 Carpenter sent a note of congratulations to the Prime Minister and commended him and his colleagues as 'practical politicians'.³⁴ 'Your note is very heartening', replied MacDonald:

The good will of few others is so pleasing to me. I have a heavy burden & I can rarely do all I want to do. I can but turn my face in the right direction & stagger on a few steps; then a rest & on again. Your note brings back memories of sunnier days.³⁵

On 29 August the *Daily Herald* had a front-page heading, '“England Arise”: A Notable Anniversary'. On this day Carpenter, the 'grand old man of Socialism', received a message of greeting from all the members of the Cabinet, together with Will Thorne,

George Lansbury, and Augustine Birrell. George Merrill had sent a photograph of Carpenter to the Prime Minister, and received a personal note from him.³⁶ 'I congratulate the nation', Carpenter was reported to have said to the *Herald* correspondent, 'on having a live Government whose members do know something of the problem of life and industry with which they have to deal'.³⁷

In the twilight of his life, it was clearly perceived that Carpenter cast a long shadow on the now vastly expanded world of labour. The Trades Union Congress, meeting in Hull in September, also sent him a message of congratulations. 'From the giddy height of my eightieth birthday', replied Carpenter:

I wish to thank the many friends who have on this occasion sent me their message of love and goodwill . . . The world, I should say, is all right, or would be all right if the people in it . . . had a grain of real belief in the actual and bed-rock fact of their common life and dependence on each other . . . Business today is a world that under a pretence of common sense, really covers and conceals a multitude of wicked falsities . . . It has been estimated that nine-tenths of our commercial and financial activities are consumed in keeping accounts against each other (embodied in ledgers, balance sheets, bills, contracts, mortgages, insurances, documents and deeds of every shape and size), of which one may say roughly that they are all drawn up in order to enforce things which plainly cannot be enforced, namely, simple honesty and mutual helpfulness. If this is not a Mad Hatter's tea-party, I don't know what is! I can only say that this sad and foolish tangle is our inheritance from the Commercial Age, and the sooner we can pass out of that age into the Age of Common Sense and the real Common Life, the better.³⁸

Hopes for the 'Age of Common Sense' that had risen with the rise of Labour to office received a rude shock in the atmosphere of suspicions (over the issue of sympathy for Bolshevism) that characterised its fall and the events which led to the General Strike of 1926 and its failure. The main conflict was centred in the coal industry, the losses of which would have to be met, in the owners' view, by lower wages, or as the miners saw it, by national subsidy or even by a change in ownership. A general strike without revolutionary aims, however, was 'nothing but a dead end',³⁹ and the General Council of the TUC had to negotiate for settlement. The strike of May 1926 has been described as 'the echo rather than the voice of class war',⁴⁰

but the miners held out till November, though they felt 'betrayed' as in 1921. Carpenter saw the miners as martyrs to the cause. In an article he wrote for the *Manchester Guardian*, he gave an account of their privation, and added:

I can see only one ultimate way out of the morass in which we are engulfed. The present commercial system will have to go, and there will have to be a return to the much simpler systems of co-operation belonging to a bygone age. . . . To that condition, or something very like it, I am convinced we shall have to return if society is to survive. I say that this after a long and close observation of life in many phases. . . . This is what the miners, I think, in a dim, subconscious way, have already perceived, for they retain in their minds much of the primitive mentality of pre-civilisation days.⁴¹

Indeed, his views became more limp and simpler as he neared the end of his life. He now believed that Communism was 'the necessary & only conclusion': it had been the early form of tribal society; it was the form under which the family still existed in the modern world; and so 'we can hardly doubt that it will be the prevailing social form of the Future'.⁴² Yet he felt he would have to give up his hopes of Communism at least for the immediate future. Early in 1927 he wrote to Clemas: 'Alas! as you say or imply, the world is so constructed that everything of necessity *goes wrong*, or runs out of joint! What is to be done? Though I have written on the cure of Civilisation generally I grieve to say I have no panacea for this present mass of human ills, & some times certainly they seem intolerable'.⁴³

A tragic incident that had taken place in the summer of 1924 somewhat clouded the rest of his life. In June that year, Constantine Saranchoy, a translator employed at the Russian Trade Delegation and a friend of Carpenter's, committed suicide near Guildford. He threw himself before a Portsmouth-London train that was travelling at express speed. According to a press-cutting which Carpenter sent to Clemas, Saranchoy had gone to visit him at his new 'Millthorpe'. He stayed there three nights, then went out never to return.⁴⁴ In the Carpenter Collection there is a typescript which gives Carpenter's view of the cause of his death. Constantine, who had worked for a Russian revolutionary press in England, came to know Carpenter

and through him an art student named 'Ted' Earle: before long the two were living together in a tiny flat in Chelsea. But disappointment in his love brought Saranchoy to Carpenter and then to his death. The sequence of events must have upset Carpenter to a considerable extent.⁴⁵

Moreover, his own contemporaries had by now nearly all died. Albert Fearnough, the scythe-maker, who had actually saved Carpenter from the slough of Civilisation, died in November 1924. Ponnambalam Arunácalam, who helped to open his eyes to the mysteries of the East, also died that year. After some discussion with Mrs Arunácalam, a volume entitled *Light from the East, being Letters on Gñánam, the Divine Knowledge* by P. Arunácalam, edited by Carpenter, came out in 1927. Half of the book was devoted to the editor's own essays dealing with such topics as the worship of the phallus, the control of desire both sexual and acquisitive, the need for birth control, and the appreciation of bisexuality. The last was also the predominant theme of a book which he prepared in collaboration with G. C. Barnard under the title *The Psychology of the Poet Shelley* (1925). There was nothing new or striking in his later writings, but his ideas on the whole became simpler and more spiritual as he advanced in age.

In February 1924 Carpenter was at Croydon, staying with his brother Alfred, and preparing 'a fresh will' with his help: he asked Clemas to become one of his literary executors.⁴⁶ According to his will which was made in the following year, £1700 would go to his 'personal friend and housemate' George Merrill and £700 to Edward Inigan, another 'personal friend and housemate'. About the same time, Illit Gröndahl, a young Norwegian who translated some of his works, joined the household at Mountside. He later recalled the evenings he spent there 'over the constant lemon-water and biscuits', the visits he made to 'Edward's hut in the garden', and walks with him on the Hog's Back near-by.⁴⁷ In 1927 Carpenter supervised the preparation of a new edition of *Towards Democracy*. He regretted his declining faculties and complained that he needed a secretary to sort out 'the floods of letters [that] cannot be counted or answered'.⁴⁸ After all his two 'housemates' were not helpful in this respect.

In January 1928 he suffered a harsh blow in the death of George

Merrill in his early sixties. 'I think that the loss of George hastened on Mr. Carpenter's death', wrote Inigan.⁴⁹ 'His life had become a cry for his comrade', recalled another witness: 'the real self was already elsewhere'.⁵⁰ He sold the new Millthorpe, partly because he now found the neighbourhood too hilly to walk about, and he and Inigan lived for a while in rooms at 17 Wodeland Avenue until they found a suitable bungalow in the lower part of the town – 'Inglenook', Joseph's Road. He then made a codicil to his will, and decided to leave an additional sum of £300 to Inigan. A few days after he had acquired the new house, he had a stroke, and he never regained his full powers, physical or mental. Inigan wheeled him out in a chair whenever the weather permitted. He began to avoid visitors, especially those who talked too much. After thirteen more months he died on 29 June 1929, watched by the faithful Inigan: he was eighty-four years old. The cause of his death was stated to be uraemia and senility.

The funeral took place on 1 July at a cemetery near his home. A simple service was conducted by the priest in charge of All Saints, Guildford. At its conclusion Captain Leonard Green, one of his literary executors, recited his poem 'Into the Regions of the Sun'. H. W. Nevinson gave an address in which he said that Carpenter's 'most valuable teaching was his own existence, the courage with which he dared the convention of the world and lived his own life on his own lines, regardless of criticism and even of abuse'. Edward Carpenter was interred in the same grave as that of his 'comrade', George Merrill. Representatives of the Labour Party were present, and there was a wreath from the Party.⁵¹

His death coincided with the return of the second Labour Government to office after a general election on a more complete franchise than ever before. As Richard Hawkin suggested, this was 'a revolution, in the bringing about of which he [Carpenter] played a considerable part'.⁵² Robert Sharland of Bristol, who was present at the funeral, was reported as having said:

It has been suggested that Carpenter was not a Social-Democrat, and in a sense that is correct. His teaching savoured more of Anarchist-Communism, but that is akin to the *ideal* of many of us. He always took a keen and helping interest in all phases of the Socialist and Labour move-

ment, realising that the success of these political and industrial efforts was an essential step to the higher state he ever visualised.⁵³

Carpenter survived all his brothers and sisters, and a considerable portion of his estate, which was estimated at £5214 gross (£4152 net) went to his nephews and nieces. His Millthorpe home in Derbyshire, however, was heavily mortgaged, and the plan to buy and preserve it as a memorial fell through. It is true that the 'Edward Carpenter International Memorial Trust' was formed to acquire the estate, and throughout the following summer Socialists made pilgrimage to the place now famous for the memories of the 'English Tolstoy'. But owing to a shortage of funds the Trust entered into negotiation with the Workers' Travel Association, and a scheme was floated to establish Millthorpe as a 'Socialist Memorial Guest House'. But finally the house was sold to a private buyer.

Towards the end of the year Henry Salt wrote to Clemas, who was helping to produce a memorial volume:

I think there must be much prejudice against E.C. in literary circles, on account of his writings on the sex question; and another trouble is that the post-war public has forgotten so much that used to be held of value. The muddle about Millthorpe is pitiable; and one is amazed at the foolish things done by Edward in recent years.⁵⁴

Salt, nevertheless, offered him an article on Carpenter which had been refused by several magazines including the *Fortnightly Review*. Shaw would not write anything for the memorial volume. 'I prefer to think of the Noble Savage in the happy hunting grounds with all his faculties restored', he wrote to Salt:

My information was that he had survived them and was lagging superfluous. It must be twenty years or thereabout since I last saw him. I found it difficult to realize that he was still here. As he wrote an autobiography nothing is needed now but a critical essay. I doubt if either of us could write it. Cheerfulness would creep. Neither Yoga nor homosexuality (or rather perhaps the curious absence of heterosex) are in our line.⁵⁵

When in 1931 the volume of essays in his memory, edited by Gilbert Beith, was published, E. M. Forster, one of the contributors, expressed apprehension that Carpenter would not figure in history. 'Yet', continued Forster, 'while we are under his spell, he does in

the strangest way manage to turn the tables on history, and makes us feel that history is not a chronicle of the human spirit at all, but just a record of people who have managed to advertise themselves.' Carpenter would never attain fame, 'for the reason that all he gave was the gift of gifts, life itself, the transference of vitality, the sense of peacefulness and power. These things cannot be chronicled'.⁵⁶ A similar picture was presented by Blatchford who wrote:

The world is a busy place and a noisy place, and if a man wants to be heard he must shout. Edward Carpenter never shouted, never hustled, never advertised. . . [He was] a man bigger and better than his book, a man who took Fortune's smiles and buffets with equal thanks, a man who, withal so modest and gentle, yet sufficed unto himself, a man who, without bluster or conceit, helped to change the thought of England.⁵⁷

An obituary in the *Manchester Guardian* was critical but penetrating. Carpenter, it read,

was an assimilator, a harmoniser, a populariser rather than an originator. There is something scrappy and short-winded about his efforts; his books are never treatises, but strings of brief essays. . . But with these reservations he was a very remarkable writer. Such different spirits as those of Whitman and Tolstoy, Nietzsche and William Morris, Shelley and Ruskin, seem to meet in his, their discords blurred and their adumbration of a common ideal emphasised with a touch at once gentle, shrewd, and courageous.⁵⁸

Carpenter was also responsible, the review went on, for the ethical and religious impulse that moved 'the first English Labour leaders, who derived their principles far more from their chapel or their readings of democratic poetry than from any close concentration on economic textbooks and theories of class war'. Perhaps this was the most fitting epitaph of all.

EPILOGUE

THE first Annual Memorial Service was held at the rear of Carpenter's old residence at Millthorpe on 29 June 1930, when H. W. Nevinson, Richard Hawkin, and several others addressed 'a huge crowd', and a recital of his songs was given by the Clarion Vocal Union. Memory of his personal charm lingered on after his death, and it was only after the end of the Second World War, about 1949, that the memorial services finally ceased; a 'Memorial Fellowship' continued until the early sixties. His 'England Arise!' was sung in the mid-sixties at a meeting of the Young Communist League in London.¹

But this is not the end of our story, for a revival of interest in Carpenter started in the 1970s. It began with a lecture delivered by Edward Carpenter, an unrelated namesake, on 'Carpenter, Democratic Author and Poet' for the Friends of Dr Williams's Library, the theological library in London. The lecturer declared himself to be concerned with 'the task of reconciling the activism of the west with the contemplative introspection of the east'.² A play was presented at the Crucible, Sheffield's new theatre, under the title of 'Edward Carpenter Lives', which was set in 'Sheffield after the revolution'. In the new social climate of permissiveness, equality of the sexes and 'gay culture', there has been a rediscovery of Carpenter as the pioneer of libertarian Socialism and sexual freedom, of communal fellowship and personal comradeship. At a time when political Socialism with the gospel of material progress appears somewhat discredited, it is perhaps good to remember the old days of

Morris and Carpenter whose emphasis was on moral and aesthetic values or to invoke the 'Religion of Socialism' that is supposed to have dominated the earlier movement.

Thus Carpenter has been commended because he 'wanted not just a political democracy but a personal democracy of feeling'.³ To be sure, he has been criticised for his tendencies to 'stereotype' masculinity and femininity, and to generalise about the lower and higher types of homosexuality, but he is highly appreciated for distinguishing between sexual pleasure and sex for procreation.⁴ We may say, however, that even in a future Socialist society the 'joy of sex' could not wholly be dissociated from reproduction, just as the 'joy of labour', another possible achievement in the new society, could not be separated from production!

Carpenter's campaign against the 'smoke nuisance' and his advocacy of nature conservation equally deserve a 'rediscovery' in view of the recent interest in ecological problems. He was in fact a man of many causes, the simple life and Socialism above all, but others too such as vegetarianism and anti-vivisection, prison reform and anti-conscription. Such causes would appear perhaps trifling or even faddish to some people, but any cause to him was a matter of love and of helping others who needed help. Lord Brockway whom we have already quoted had this to add: 'His features were almost those of what is depicted as Jesus Christ. I always had the impression of a beautiful, gentle, friendly, equalitarian person – not only in theory but in his association with every individual, whether a Lord or a labourer, as equal human beings.'⁵ After all Carpenter was the poet of *Towards Democracy* who longed for a millennium on earth, a millennium not of riches, nor of mechanical or intellectual facilities, but of free men and women and their free and equal association.

It remains only to summarise his ideas and to appraise their relevance. Admittedly Carpenter was one of the few outstanding personalities in the revival of Socialism in the 1880s: he represented a valuable strand in its texture, valuable because rare and faint: the spirit of reconciliation. His economic knowledge was as defective as Morris's, but he ventured to mediate, albeit ineffectually, between Hyndman and Shaw in their assessment of the labour theory of value. He did

not support Morris when Morris led a revolt against Hyndman's leadership in the SDF, though he admired the Socialist poet who as a rule was more keenly concerned with the quality of life and work than Hyndman. He was willing to co-operate with Morris's Socialist League, but this was partly because he was attracted by the Anarchist principle of federalism that was preached in the League. Indeed, he was happier among local Socialists who shunned the sectarian feuds of the national leaders. His initial enthusiasm for the ILP can be explained by the fact that it came into existence mainly as a federation of independent Socialist movements in the provinces. He was increasingly alienated from it as its leadership began to be absorbed in the task of building up a party machine suitable for parliamentary politics.

He did not trust those who regarded themselves as infallible, and this partly explains why he was not favourably inclined to Marxism. It is true, he learned much from the Marxist analysis of surplus value, but he rarely mentioned Marx, and held aloof from Marxism as it was propagated by the SDF. Yet he never attacked those who advocated class war, for they, too, had some useful part to play in his larger Socialism. Indeed, the Labour movement as a whole was class-based as well as classless or class-free as it was born of a 'class society' which was 'doomed'.

Carpenter himself was not wholly immune from revolutionary rhetoric – indeed almost all the pioneer Socialists indulged in it in one form or other. At least until the Walsall Trial he waited anxiously for an 'S.R.' as against an 'S.E.' which, he felt, would be disappointing. Yet his hopes for an 'S.R.' were nothing more than the expression of his strong faith in the birth of a new society, a millenarian belief which was a common feature in the evangelical or missionary stage of the Socialist movement. When that stage was superseded by the more prosaic one of power politics, he withdrew into the world of humanitarianism and sexual reform which, he felt, would not be antagonistic to Socialism even of the new stage but rather improve it by making it more human.

His Socialism was directly linked with his own personality. As Morris's Socialism derived from his strong sense of the degradation of art under commercialism and Hyndman's from concern about the weaknesses of British capitalism and the Empire, so Carpenter's

emerged from his awareness of the miseries of alienation both personal and social in the respectable world of Victorian England. Sexual alienation was widespread, and in his case enlarged by homosexuality. For him, the gospel of Whitman supplanted that of the Victorian Church, for the ministry of which he had been trained. If he had married 'a nice smug little wife', as he later confessed, he would have become a Bishop in the end. Instead he lived with a working-man and ended up as a recluse. Nevertheless, he continued to believe in the emancipation of women as well as of the workers, for all were victims of commercial civilisation.

He was attracted to Sheffield by the ruggedness and squalor of the industrial town and also by the Yorkshire grit and sanity he found among the common people who lived in it. Manufacture there was not entirely severed from its agricultural surroundings, and Carpenter found in a scythe-maker and farm labourer a life close to nature. This meant salvation for his personal woes, and its discovery marked the beginning of his more serious speculation about Democracy and Socialism.

His egalitarian sentiments were deeply enriched by his contacts with the Eastern religion, but he was essentially an evolutionary Anarchist, a Western product. Unlike the Fabians who came to believe in Social Darwinism and the survival of efficient societies and institutions, he turned to the Lamarckian theory of evolution which emphasised desire as the function of variation, desire being 'love' in his interpretation: love would unite men by linking the finite with the infinite, and society would grow in search of this new ideal by successively throwing off the husks of the old. Indeed, it was, as Beatrice Webb conceded, 'the metaphysics of the Socialist creed', and it certainly encouraged Socialist sentiments.

This new ideal involved naturalism as well as Socialism, savagery as well as refinement, and his Socialism became truly pluralistic, for it affirmed 'an immense diversity of institutions and habits'. Thus it amounted simply to a faith in the Labour movement as a whole. He at once welcomed the growth of the Labour Party and the spread of its enemy, Syndicalism. He advocated what he called 'double collectivism', voluntary as well as state-directed. State interference itself would mean an awakening of public conscience rather than a strengthening of bureaucracy. As the sentiment of the common life

grew, private property loses its exclusiveness, and becomes a matter of use and convenience among friends, an almost Godwinian idea.

He apparently believed in the same diversity of habits and institutions in the matter of sex. Sex, and homosexuality for that matter, he felt, would override class division; in this Symonds was an inspiration to him, and he in turn exerted a definite influence on Forster whose homosexual love went beyond the divide of race as well as of class. It was late in his life, in his fifties and sixties, that he engaged in a crusade to make homosexuality appear sound and reasonable if not respectable, and his age will partly account for his increasing ethereality in dealing with the subject: physical union was mentioned mainly as the allegory of real union which was spiritual and perhaps social as well. He provided a reservoir of radical sex reform from which Mrs Ellis and Mrs Salt, Graves and Sassoon, Forster and even D. H. Lawrence drew inspiration and challenging ideas. From the literary point of view, however, his own work was not distinguished. It lacked originality, and his estrangement from Whitman was almost certainly due to the latter's feeling that Carpenter was imitating him to an embarrassing extent.

Finally, we may say that his homosexuality, though part of his essence, was by no means the sole reason for his becoming a Socialist, but in him Socialism and sex reform were closely interrelated, and from these, he felt, would arise a new sentiment of humanity. Morris in his day strove to make Socialists; Carpenter the man. Without disparaging the efforts of other pioneers, we can conclude with the words of the review of *Chants of Labour* already quoted: 'to make men Socialists is nothing, but to make Socialism human is a great thing'.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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- 2 *New Age*, 17 March 1910.
- 3 *Commonweal*, 20 April 1890.
- 4 Leo Tolstoy, 'Modern Science', *New Age*, 31 March 1898; Aylmer Maude to E. Carpenter, 21 Feb. 1905, Carpenter Collection MSS 386.119. (Hereafter MSS means Carpenter Collection MSS, Sheffield City Library.)
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- 5 Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, p. 37.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 10 C. W. Carpenter to Edward Carpenter, 13 May 1860, MSS 349.66.
- 11 Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, p. 30.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.
- 13 Ida G. Hyett, 'From the Family Point of View' in Gilbert Beith (ed.), *Edward Carpenter in Appreciation* (1931), p. 115.
- 14 Ida G. Hyett in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 114.
- 15 Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, pp. 14, 28, 29.
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- 17 Quoted in Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, I (1897), p. 46.
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2. A CAMBRIDGE LIBERAL

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- 3 MSS 1.
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- 14 Christopher Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-86* (1976), p. 14.
- 15 *Cambridge Independent Press*, 5 Feb. 1870.
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- 17 *Dictionary of National Biography*.
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- 20 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 12 Sept. 1869, MSS 351.1.
- 21 E. A. Beck to E. Carpenter, 17 March 1871, MSS 386.7.
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- 29 MSS 2.2. See Henry and Millicent Garret Fawcett, *Essays and Lectures on Social and Political Subjects* (1872).
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- 31 MSS 2.9.
- 32 E. Carpenter, *Narcissus and Other Poems* (1873), p. 233.
- 33 Eliza Carpenter to Edward Carpenter, 23 Feb. (no year), MSS 342.23.
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 55 Carpenter, *The Promised Land* (1909), p. 116.

3. A LECTURER FOR THE PEOPLE

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4. TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

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- 13 C. R. Ashbee, Diary, Ashbee Papers, King's College Library. James Wycliffe Headlam, later Professor of Greek and Ancient History at Queen's College, London, was an undergraduate at King's College, Cambridge, and received his BA in that year. Roger Fry, later Slade Professor of Fine Art, was also an undergraduate at King's College at the time. Brauholtz was University Lecturer in French, and belonged to King's College.
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7. LABOUR AND CIVILISATION

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8. LABOUR AND ANARCHISM

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- 28 *Sheffield Anarchist*, 19 July 1891; *Commonweal*, 11 July 1891.
- 29 *Commonweal*, 28 Nov. 1891. The 'pretty verses' referred to here were in fact an old piece, called 'The Carpenter and the King', which was published with very slight alterations under the title 'The Smith and the King' in the *Workman's Times* (14 Nov. 1891). Reproduced in Carpenter's *Sketches from Life*, pp. 255-6.
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- 31 *Commonweal*, 26 Dec. 1891.
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- 36 *The Times*, 5 April 1892. When *Commonweal* sought to publish 'the true story of the Walsall Police Plot', its printing office was raided by the police. See *Commonweal*, 12, 23 April 1892.
- 37 *Saturday Review*, 9 April 1892.
- 38 *Freedom*, Dec. 1892.
- 39 E. P. Thompson, *William Morris* (1977 ed.), p. 593.
- 40 J. B. Glasier to J. M. Brown, 24 March 1892, Bristol ILP Archives.

9. JOURNEY TO THE EAST

- 1 All this reasoning can be found in his *Civilisation*, which was a philosophical sequel to his *Towards Democracy* and *England's Ideal*, respectively a poetical and a social expression of the same sentiments.
- 2 P. Arunácalam to E. Carpenter, 25 Nov. 1888 in Arunácalam, *Light from the East* (1927), pp. 32-2.
- 3 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 23 Feb. 1890, MSS 351.53.
- 4 E. Carpenter to J. M. Brown, 24 Oct. 1890, MSS 372.10

- 5 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 5 Nov. 1890, MSS 354.10.
- 6 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 7 Dec. 1890, MSS 351.56.
- 7 E. Carpenter, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta* (1892, 1910 ed.), pp. 154, 159-60, 165-6.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 178-81.
- 9 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 24 Nov. 1890, MSS 354.11.
- 10 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 22 Feb. 1891, MSS 354.12.
- 11 E. Carpenter, 'Narayan', *Sketches from Life*, pp. 49-85.
- 12 Carpenter, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, p. 312.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 318.
- 14 P. Arunácalam to E. Carpenter, 15 Feb. 1891, MSS 271.43.
- 15 Carpenter, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, pp. 352, 356-7.
- 16 Horace Traubel (ed.), *At the Graveside of Walt Whitman* (1892), p. 27.
- 17 Carpenter, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, p. 112.
- 18 H. S. Salt to E. Carpenter, 21 March 1892, MSS 356.10.
- 19 *Justice*, 16 April 1892.
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- 21 *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 18 Feb. 1893.
- 22 H. S. Salt to E. Carpenter, 22 Feb. 1893, MSS 356.13.
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- 2 George Hendrick, *Henry Salt, Humanitarian Reformer and Man of Letters* (Urbana, 1977), p. 56.
- 3 H. S. Salt, *Seventy Years among Savages* (1921), p. 73.
- 4 H. S. Salt to S. A. Jones, 12 April 1890, quoted in Hendrick, *Salt*, p. 26.
- 5 G. B. Shaw, Preface to Stephen Winsten, *Salt and his Circle* (1951), p. 12.
- 6 H. S. Salt, *Seventy Years*, p. 75.
- 7 G. B. Shaw, Preface to Winsten, *Salt*, p. 9.
- 8 Mrs Salt to E. Carpenter, 27 Dec. 1901, quoted in Hendrick, *Salt*, p. 15.
- 9 Winsten, *Salt*, p. 85.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 11 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 7 June 1891, MSS 351.57.
- 12 *Seed-time*, July 1891.
- 13 E. Carpenter, 'Modern Science, the True method and the False', in *Vivisection* (Humanitarian League Publications, no. 6, 1893).
- 14 H. S. Salt to E. Carpenter, 13 Nov. 1903, MSS 356.22.
- 15 *Clarion*, 1 Dec. 1894.
- 16 H. S. Salt to E. Carpenter, 25 Nov. 1911, MSS 356.35.
- 17 Carpenter's translation was first published in *Humane Review*, Jan. 1906, reprinted in *Humanitarian*, Oct. 1913, and also as a pamphlet in 1913.
- 18 *Seed-time*, April 1895.
- 19 E. Carpenter, 'Prison Methods', *Humanity*, Dec. 1897.

- 20 E. Carpenter, 'Mary Ansell and Capital Punishment', *Humanity*, Sept. 1899.
- 21 E. Carpenter, *Prisons, Police and Punishment* (1905), pp. 40-1, 77, 88.
- 22 The first number (July 1889) was issued as *The Sower*.
- 23 *Seed-time*, April 1892.
- 24 *Sower*, July 1889.
- 25 Muirhead in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, pp. 155-7.
- 26 E. Carpenter, 'The Return to Nature', *Humanitarian*, Sept. 1896.
- 27 E. Carpenter, 'The British Museum and Sandals', *Westminster Gazette*, 15 April 1897.
- 28 T. Maguire to E. Carpenter, 26 Nov. 1892, *Tom Maguire, A Remembrance*, p. xii.
- 29 E. Carpenter, 'Our Industrial System in the Past and the Future', 1892, MSS 54; 'Breakdown of Industrial System', 1892, MSS 55.
- 30 MSS 57.
- 31 E. Carpenter to J. B. Glasier, 1 Jan. 1893, Bristol ILP Archives.
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- 36 G. B. Shaw to E. Carpenter, 19 July, 19 August 1896, MSS 68.
- 37 E. Carpenter (ed.), *Forecasts of the Coming Century* (1897), *passim*.

II. THE SUBLIMATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

- 1 Mrs K. Salt to E. Carpenter, 16 Dec. 1892, MSS 355.8.
- 2 R. Blatchford to E. Carpenter, 11 Jan. 1894, MSS 386.46.
- 3 E. Carpenter, *Sex-Love and its Place in a Free Society* (Manchester, 1894), p. 4.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 5 E. Carpenter, 'The Bathing in Endcliffe Wood', *Sheffield Independent*, 21 June 1888.
- 6 Phyllis Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds, A Biography* (1964), *passim*.
- 7 J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 20 March 1892, Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters (ed.), *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, III (Detroit, 1969), p. 675.
- 8 Grosskurth, *Symonds*, p. 286.
- 9 H. Ellis to E. Carpenter, 17 Dec. 1892, MSS 357-5.
- 10 J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 29 Dec. 1892, Schueller and Peters (ed.), *Letters of Symonds*, III, pp. 797-9.
- 11 J. A. Symonds, *In the Key of the Blue* (1893), p. 77.
- 12 J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 10 Jan. 1893, *Letters*, III, p. 803.
- 13 E. Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, p. 225.
- 14 J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 21 Jan. 1893, *Letters*, III, p. 808. Roden

- Noel, a poet and admirer of Whitman, was the father of Conrad Noel, the future Socialist vicar of Thaxted.
- 15 It would be interesting in this respect to note that Symonds for the benefit of Carpenter copied part of the letter he had received from Whitman, in which the latter objected to 'morbid inferences' derived from his poem 'Calamus' and rather boasted of his having begotten six children. J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 13 Feb. 1893, *Letters*, III, pp. 818-19.
- 16 J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 5 Feb. 1893, *Letters*, III, pp. 813-14.
- 17 E. Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1907 ed.), pp. 141-2.
- 18 Horatio F. Brown, *John Addington Symonds, A Biography* (1903), p. 479. J. A. Symonds to E. Carpenter, 27 Feb. 1893, *Letters*, III, p. 815.
- 19 H. Ellis, *My Life* (1940), pp. 195-6.
- 20 Mrs Edith Ellis to E. Carpenter, 27 Dec. 1893, MSS 358.1.
- 21 E. Carpenter to Mrs Kate Salt, 21 Feb. 1894, MSS 354.29.
- 22 *Clarion*, 3 Feb. 1894.
- 23 Charles Fourier, *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements et des Destinées Générales*, originally published in 1808 (new edition, Paris, 1967), pp. 146-7, 156.
- 24 E. Carpenter, *Woman* (Manchester, 1894), pp. 4-5.
- 25 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 9 April 1894, MSS 354.31.
- 26 Olive Schreiner to E. Carpenter, 8 Oct. 1894, MSS 359.73.
- 27 E. Carpenter, *Homogenic Love* (Manchester, 1894), pp. 14-15. This was actually published early in 1895.
- 28 The term was coined by K. H. Ulrichs, the German student of sexual inversion, from *Uranos*, i.e. heaven.
- 29 Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, p. 34.
- 30 *Freedom*, July 1895. A defence of Wilde published in the *Star* and signed 'Hevellyn' must have been written by Carpenter. His own copy of the printed letter was signed 'E.C.' in his own hand. Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 1-66.
- 31 W. T. Stead to E. Carpenter, 22 June 1895, MSS 386.54.
- 32 E. Carpenter to G. Hukin, 31 July (1895), MSS 361.21.
- 33 H. Ellis, *My Life*, p. 298.
- 34 *Saturday Review*, 5 Nov. 1898.
- 35 Arthur Calder-Marshall, *Lewd, Blasphemous & Obscene* (1972), p. 205.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 226-7.
- 37 E. Carpenter, 'Affection in Education', *International Journal of Ethics*, 1898-9.

12. GEORGE MERRILL

- 1 E. Carpenter to Mrs Kate Salt, 19 Oct. 1892, MSS 354.19.
- 2 E. Carpenter, 'George Merrill, a true history and study in Psychology', MSS 363.17.
- 3 *Ibid.*

- 4 Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, p. 152.
- 5 H. S. Salt, *Company I have kept* (1930), pp. 55-6.
- 6 Katharine Bruce Glasier in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 88.
- 7 Ashbee Memoirs, MSS, Victoria and Albert Museum Library.
- 8 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 1 July 1897, MSS 354.47.
- 9 G. Merrill to E. Carpenter, 8 Nov. 1896, MSS 363.4.
- 10 G. Merrill to E. Carpenter, 11 Nov. 1896, MSS 363.5.
- 11 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 14 July 1897, MSS 351.75.
- 12 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 2 Sept., 22 Sept., 3 Oct. 1897, Brotherton Collection; E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 29 August 1897, MSS 351.76; E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 31 August 1897, MSS 354.49.
- 13 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 12 Oct. 1897, MSS 354.50.
- 14 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 4 Nov. 1897, MSS 351.77.
- 15 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 3 Dec. 1897, MSS 354.51.
- 16 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 4 Feb. 1898, MSS 354.54.
- 17 E. Carpenter to C. G. Oates, 10 Feb. 1898, MSS 351.80.
- 18 E. Carpenter, 'George Merrill', p. 34, MSS 363.17.
- 19 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 4 Jan. 1898, Brotherton Collection.
- 20 E. Carpenter, Account Book, MSS 325.
- 21 E. Carpenter to Max Flint, 23 Dec. 1901, MSS 464.17.
- 22 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 19 Feb. 1902, Brotherton Collection.
- 23 Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1907 ed.), pp. 416-17.
- 24 Charles F. Sixsmith, 'Edward as I knew him', Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, pp. 218-19.
- 25 *Irish Citizen*, 12 June 1915.

13. LITERATURE AND SEX

- 1 E. Carpenter, *Angels' Wings* (1898), *passim*.
- 2 *Sheffield Guardian*, 31 Jan. 1913.
- 3 Sixsmith in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 222.
- 4 *Independent Review*, Jan. 1905.
- 5 Beatrice Webb to Mary Playne, 21 June 1907, Norman Mackenzie (ed.), *The Letters of Sidney and Beatrice Webb* (Cambridge, 1978), II, p. 268.
- 6 E. Carpenter, 'Morality under Socialism', *Albany Review*, Sept. 1907. 'Beyond-man' was Carpenter's word for Übermensch. 'Over-man' was used in Tille's translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1896). G. K. Chesterton was one of the first critics to link Shaw's Superman with Nietzsche's.
- 7 G. K. Chesterton, 'The Evolution of Corruption', *Albany Review*, Nov. 1907.
- 8 H. Ellis to E. Carpenter, 26 Dec. 1902, MSS 357.10.
- 9 *Clarion*, 19 Dec. 1902.
- 10 J. Bruce Glasier, Diary, 25 Jan. 1903. I owe this reference to Dr Fred Reid of the University of Warwick.

- 11 Winsten, *Salt*, pp. 111-12.
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- 13 *British Medical Journal*, 26 June 1909.
- 14 M. D. O'Brien, *Socialism and Infamy* (2 March 1909), *passim*.
- 15 His newspaper letter dated 24 Feb. 1909, MSS 362.98.
- 16 G. Hukin to E. Carpenter, 26 March 1909, MSS 362.99.
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- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 4 May 1909, Brotherton Collection.
- 21 J. Bruce Glasier, Diary, 28 June, 3 July 1909. I owe this to the kindness of Dr Fred Reid.
- 22 E. Carpenter to Mrs Salt, 9 Sept. 1909, MSS 354.98.
- 23 G. Hukin to E. Carpenter, 18 March 1910, MSS 362.106. O'Brien complained to a probation officer at Chesterfield that his household belongings had been stolen during his 'absence' by his 'dishonest wife' and 'her worthless children' who circulated 'the story' that his mind had been deranged owing to his violent anti-Socialist agitation. James Carr to E. Carpenter, 31 May 1913, MSS 386.214.
- 24 *Daily News*, 20 June 1905.
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- 30 Siegfried Sassoon to E. Carpenter, 27 July 1911, MSS 386.179.
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- 32 R. Graves to E. Carpenter, 30 May 1914, MSS 386.234.
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- 34 P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster, A Life*, I (1977), pp. 255-7.
- 35 E. M. Forster, terminal note to *Maurice* (1971, Penguin ed. 1972).
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- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 39 Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 3.71.
- 40 E. Carpenter to W. Hopkin, 4 April 1916, Delavenay, *Lawrence and Carpenter*, p. 31.

- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
 42 *New Leader*, 5 July 1929.
 43 D. A. N. Jones, 'Dictatorship of the prigs?', *Listener*, 14 Sept. 1978.

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- 2 Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 2.95; *Manifesto of the Sheffield Socialist Society* (1899), Brotherton Collection.
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- 6 S. C. Cronwright Schreiner to E. Carpenter, 22 May 1900, MSS 360.4.
- 7 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 12 August 1901, Brotherton Collection.
- 8 E. Carpenter, 'India, China and Ourselves', *I.L.P. News*, July 1900.
- 9 Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 1.62.
- 10 E. Carpenter, 'Tangier' II, *New Age*, 7 Feb. 1907.
- 11 E. Carpenter, 'The New South African Union', *Labour Leader*, 27 August, 3 Sept. 1909.
- 12 Chicago Federation of Labor (ed.), *The Cause of Industrial Panic* (1904).
- 13 *Unemployed Demonstration in Sheffield*, 1905; *Sheffield Weekly Independent*, 17 July 1905.
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- 19 Carpenter on 'Socialism & State Interference' in Chesterfield, 19 Oct. 1908, newspaper cutting, 1.93, 4.86.
- 20 E. Carpenter, *The Wreck of Modern Industry and its Reorganisation* (Manchester, 1910), reprinted in *Towards Industrial Freedom* (1917).
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- 22 An interview by 'C.L.E.', *Labour Leader*, 20 August 1909.
- 23 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 12 August 1910.
- 24 The lecture entitled 'The Socialist Outlook' was given on 8 October 1911 at the ILP Institute, Brightside, Sheffield, MSS 177.
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 33 Constance Lytton to E. Carpenter, 17 Jan. 1909, MSS 386.164.
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 35 Constance Lytton to E. Carpenter, 9 March 1910, MSS 386.170.
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 38 Isabella O. Ford to E. Carpenter, 25 August 1913, MSS 386.220.
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 40 E. Ellis, *The Three Modern Seers* (1910), p. 195.
 41 E. Carpenter, *The Drama of Love and Death* (1912), pp. 70, 77, 80.
 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 195.
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 44 *Socialist Review*, August 1912.
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 46 Mrs Ellen Hyett to E. Carpenter, 8 August 1908, MSS 342.4.
 47 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 21 March 1912, Brotherton Collection.
 48 Alfred Carpenter to E. Carpenter, 22 April 1912, MSS 346.12.

15. THE GREAT WAR

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 3 E. Carpenter, 'The Roots of the Great War', *English Review*, Dec. 1914.
 4 E. Carpenter, 'The Healing of Nations', *English Review*, Jan. 1915.
 5 H. M. Swanwick, *Builders of Peace* (1924), p. 31.
 6 E. D. Morel to E. Carpenter, 4 Jan. 1915, MSS 271.150.
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 8 E. Carpenter, *Diary* 1915, MSS 259.
 9 E. B. Lloyd to E. Carpenter, 3 March 1915, MSS 368.10.
 10 'Programme of Conference upon the Pacifist Philosophy of Life', Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 4.92, and 1.92.

- 11 Romain Rolland to E. Carpenter, 20 July 1915, MSS 377.23.
- 12 MSS 259.
- 13 E. B. Lloyd to E. Carpenter, 2 June 1915, MSS 368.13.
- 14 Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 1.94; see also his letter 'Against Conscription' in *Daily News*, 26 Nov. 1915, and his address read at the 'National Convention' of the No Conscription Fellowship held in the Memorial Hall, London, in November 1915, *Labour Leader*, 2 Dec. 1915.
- 15 Gilbert Murray in *Nation*, 24 April 1916; the passage quoted is from E. Carpenter, *The Healing of Nations*, p. 226.
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- 18 Lecture note on 'Rest', MSS 180.5.
- 19 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 19 March 1916, Brotherton Collection.
- 20 E. B. Lloyd to E. Carpenter, 6 April 1916, MSS 368.17.
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- 31 S. Sassoon to E. Carpenter, 11 July 1917, MSS 386.293.
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- 33 Wilfred Walter to E. Carpenter, 7 March 1917, MSS 386.265.
- 34 Sydney Lomer to E. Carpenter, 19 April 1915, MSS 386.254.
- 35 George W. Clemas to E. Carpenter, 22 Jan. 1916, MSS 386.263.
- 36 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 26 August 1917, MSS 390.15.
- 37 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 5 April 1919, MSS 390.34.
- 38 *Nation*, 17 Feb. 1917.
- 39 H. M. Hyndman to E. Carpenter, 9 Dec. 1917, MSS 386.302.
- 40 *Herald*, 16 March 1918.
- 41 *Herald*, 2 March 1918.
- 42 E. Carpenter to E. M. Forster, 13 March 1918, Forster Papers, King's College, Cambridge.
- 43 G. Hyett to E. Carpenter, 28 April 1918, MSS 345.1.
- 44 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 11 Nov. 1918, Brotherton Collection.

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- 1 Diary, 19 July 1919, MSS 265; E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 20 July 1919, Brotherton Collection.
- 2 Diary, 19 April 1919, MSS 264.
- 3 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 23 April 1919, MSS 390.36.
- 4 H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (1963), p. 163.
- 5 *Daily Herald*, 28 August, 8 Sept. 1919.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1919.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 17 Oct., 27 Nov. 1919.
- 8 MS letter to *Herald* (1920), Carpenter Collection newspaper cutting, 1.72.
- 9 H. W. Nevinson in *Nation*, 1 July 1916.
- 10 H. Ellis to E. Carpenter, 6 Jan. 1915, MSS 357.18.
- 11 H. Ellis to E. Carpenter, 14 Sept. 1916, MSS 357.24.
- 12 H. Ellis to E. Carpenter, 19 Sept. 1916, MSS 357.25.
- 13 Diary, 2 Nov. 1916, MSS 260.
- 14 Diary, 22, 23 March 1917, MSS 261.
- 15 H. S. Salt to E. Carpenter, 5 April 1919, MSS 356.40.
- 16 Laurence Thompson, *The Enthusiasts* (1971), p. 220.
- 17 E. Carpenter, 'Last Visits to Bruce Glasier', *Labour Leader*, 10 June 1920.
- 18 Wilfred Whiteley, *J. Bruce Glasier, A Memorial* [1920], pp. 28-9.
- 19 Diary, 4 Feb. 1920, MSS 266.
- 20 Ida G. Hyett to E. Carpenter, 15 Dec. 1920, MSS 345.2.
- 21 S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner to E. Carpenter, 6 July 1921, MSS 360.6. Olive gave birth to a daughter in 1895, but the baby died the next day.
- 22 Diary, 30, 31 March and 1 April 1920, MSS 266.
- 23 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 25 July 1921, MSS 390.45.
- 24 E. Carpenter, 'Back to the Wild', *Free Oxford*, 22 Oct. 1921.
- 25 R. F. Muirhead in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 157.
- 26 E. Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1907 ed.), pp. 417-19.
- 27 Licence, dated 1 Jan. 1920, MSS 323.
- 28 Sixsmith in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, pp. 218, 229.
- 29 E. Carpenter to A. Mattison, 15 July 1922, Brotherton Collection.
- 30 Sixsmith in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 229.
- 31 Edward Inigan in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, pp. 119ff.
- 32 E. Carpenter to J. R. MacDonald, 18 April 1921, MacDonald Papers, PRO 30/69.
- 33 E. Carpenter, 'The Miners' Instinct', *Daily News*, 3 May 1921.
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- 35 J. R. MacDonald to E. Carpenter, 26 July 1924, MSS 386.404.
- 36 *Evening Standard*, 29 August 1924.
- 37 *Daily Herald*, 29 August 1924.

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- 39 H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism*, p. 182.
- 40 G. A. Phillips, *The General Strike: the Politics of Industrial Conflict* (1976), p. 273.
- 41 *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Oct. 1926.
- 42 E. Carpenter, 'Communism', MSS 224.
- 43 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 3 Jan. 1927, MSS 390.65.
- 44 Enclosure in a letter from E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 6 June 1924, MSS 390.54.
- 45 E. Carpenter, 'Constantine', MSS 386.16.
- 46 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 4 Feb. 1924, MSS 390.50.
- 47 Gröndahl in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, p. 105.
- 48 E. Carpenter to G. W. Clemas, 16 Nov. 1926, MSS 390.64.
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- 54 H. S. Salt to G. W. Clemas, 16 Dec. 1929, MSS 390.76.
- 55 Quoted in H. S. Salt to G. W. Clemas, 25 Sept. 1930, MSS 390.76.
- 56 E. M. Forster in Beith (ed.), *Carpenter*, pp. 80-1.
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EPILOGUE

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- 2 Edward Carpenter, *Edward Carpenter, A Restatement and Reappraisal* (1970), p. 30.
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- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
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For a full bibliography see *A Bibliography of Edward Carpenter* prepared by Sheffield City Library (Sheffield, 1949).

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