

DISSERTATIONES PHILOLOGIAE ANGLICAE
UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

3

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**JOHN BUCHAN'S HEROES AND
THE CHIVALRIC IDEAL:
GENTLEMEN BORN**

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ABSTRACT

The thesis studies the idea of chivalry as manifest in the behaviour and choices of aristocratic and upper middle class male protagonists, referred to in the thesis as ‘gentlemen born’, in John Buchan’s (1875–1940) novels and a selection of short stories. The method employed is close reading of the texts to ascertain pertinent motifs and patterns of behaviour in order to discuss them in their historical context. This was seen as a viable line of enquiry as both chivalry and many of Buchan’s works were for more than half a century ignored as dated subjects and have only comparatively recently enjoyed a revival of scholarly interest. The thesis is a part of a bigger Buchan Project, comprising also parts called ‘gentlemen made’, ‘nature’s gentlemen’ and ‘failures and villains’ which will be published in book form in the near future.

To root the analysis firmly in the historical context Buchan’s class position vis-à-vis the ideals his protagonists hold and his principles of writing his peculiar kind of romance fiction are discussed in the *Introduction*.

In order to define the terms and create a base for further reference, a survey of the evolution of the idea of chivalry and the many forms it took over its thousand-year development into the gentlemanly code of honour was seen as necessary, the more so that Buchan’s historical fiction itself covers nearly five hundred years. Thus the part called *The Victorian Gentleman and the Chivalric Ideal* looks at how the chivalric ideal came into being and how it metamorphosed into the kind of Victorian and Edwardian chivalry which allows Buchan’s novels to be treated as modern romances of knight errantry.

The main body of the thesis looks at *Gentlemen Born* in Buchan’s shorter and longer fiction – characters that carry nobility in their blood and form a sizeable subgroup of his heroes, their birth setting them apart from other chivalrous gentlemen in his oeuvre and giving their particular brand of chivalry its peculiar character. The characters are treated roughly in the order of their chronological appearance which allows the reader to follow changes in Buchan’s perception of chivalry as a viable code and the code’s own fluctuating fortunes.

The *Conclusion*, besides summing up the findings concerning the characters discussed in the thesis, also provides a short synopsis of the other parts of the Buchan Project which were left out of the thesis for reasons of space.

ABBREVIATIONS

BD	–	<i>The Blanket of the Dark</i>
CM	–	<i>The Courts of the Morning</i>
CSS/I	–	<i>The Complete Short Stories</i> Vol. I
CSS/II	–	<i>The Complete Short Stories</i> Vol. II
CSS/III	–	<i>The Complete Short Stories</i> Vol. III
DF	–	<i>The Dancing Floor</i>
FF	–	<i>The Free Fishers</i>
G	–	<i>Greenmantle</i>
HH	–	<i>The Half-Hearted</i>
IS	–	<i>The Island of Sheep</i>
JBB	–	<i>John Burnet of Barns</i>
KG	–	<i>The King's Grace 1910–1935</i>
LL	–	<i>A Lost Lady of Old Years</i>
LW	–	<i>A Lodge in the Wilderness</i>
M	–	<i>Midwinter</i>
MHD	–	<i>Memory Hold-the-Door</i>
MS	–	<i>Mr. Standfast</i>
PC	–	<i>The Prince of the Captivity</i>
PH	–	<i>The Power-House</i>
PK	–	<i>The Path of the King</i>
SHR	–	<i>Sick Heart River</i>
SQM	–	<i>Sir Quixote of the Moors</i>
TH	–	<i>The Three Hostages</i>
TNS	–	<i>The Thirty-Nine Steps</i>
WR	–	<i>Sir Walter Raleigh</i>

Dates of Publication of John Buchan's Works Discussed in the Thesis

- 1895 *Sir Quixote of the Moors*
1896 'A Captain of Salvation', 'Afternoon', 'An Individualist'
1898 *John Burnet of Barns*
1899 *A Lost Lady of Old Years*, 'A Journey of Little Profit', 'A Reputation',
'At the Article of Death', 'At the Rising of the Waters', 'The Black
Fishers', 'The Herd of Standlan', 'The Moor Song', 'The Oasis in the
Snow', 'Politics and the May-Fly', 'Prester John', 'Streams of Water in
the South', 'The Earlier Affection'
1900 *The Half-Hearted*
1902 'Fountainblue', 'No-Man's Land', 'The Far Islands', 'The Watcher by
the Threshold'
1903 *The African Colony: Studies in Reconstruction*
1906 *A Lodge in the Wilderness*
1910 *Prester John*, 'The Lemnian'
1911 *Sir Walter Raleigh*
1912 'The Grove of Ashtaroth', 'The Kings of Orion', 'The Riding of
Ninemileburn'
1913 *The Marquis of Montrose*, 'Divus' Johnston'
1915 *The Thirty-Nine Steps, Salute to Adventurers*
1916 *The Power-House, Greenmantle*
1919 *Mr. Standfast*
1920 *The Path of the King*
1922 *Huntingtower, Midwinter*
1924 *The Three Hostages*
1925 *John Macnab, The Man and the Book: Sir Walter Scott*
1926 *The Dancing Floor*
1927 *Witch Wood*
1928 *The Runagates Club*, 'A Ship to Tarshish', 'Fullcircle', 'Skule Skerry',
'Tendebant Manus', 'The Green Wildebeest', 'The Wind in the Portico'
1929 *The Courts of the Morning*
1930 *Castle Gay*, 'The King of Ypres'
1931 *The Blanket of the Dark*
1932 *The Gap in the Curtain*
1933 *A Prince of the Captivity*
1934 *The Free Fishers*
1935 *The King's Grace 1910–1935, The House of the Four Winds*
1936 *The Island of Sheep*
1940 *Memory Hold-the-Door*
1941 *Sick Heart River*
1996 'Gideon Scott'

A land of peace where lost romance
And ghostly shine of helm and lance
Still dwell by castled scarp and lea
And the lost homes of chivalry,
And the good fairy folk, my dear,
Who speak for cunning souls to hear,
In crook of glen and bower of hill
Sing of the Happy Ages still.

John Buchan. "From the Pentland, Looking North and South"

INTRODUCTION: BUCHAN AND ROMANCE

The present thesis proposes to address the problematic of the idea of chivalry as manifest in John Buchan's novels and short stories. The idea to study the complex of ideas that can be grouped under the general label 'chivalry' in Buchan's works first occurred to the author of the thesis when reading Buchan's modern adventure stories, his famous 'shockers'. The gentlemanly code of honour there manifest was intriguing, especially the seemingly illogical choice of the hero to give his blatantly evil adversary a second chance, to the detriment of his own mission. Further close reading of his texts revealed other facets of behaviour now commonly thought obsolete or derided as elitist.

It is generally recognized today that in the modern egalitarian and meritocratic society the English gentleman has become nearly extinct, the few surviving members of the species preferring not to flaunt their affiliation. With the demise of aristocratic power, the cultural code shaping the behaviour of that class has been largely abandoned in favour of more relaxed modes of social interaction. The collapse of British imperial rule has further diminished the authority of the set of assumptions which governed British behaviour at home and abroad. The British, or rather the English, gentleman, so revered and envied in the heyday of empire when he set the tone of social intercourse with his less favoured rivals and subject nations, with the backlash of imperial demise has lost much of his credibility. In the post-imperial rage and angst, the gentlemanly ethic came in for its share of criticism for its association with the imperial enterprise. From an object of veneration, the gentleman became the general laughing stock, his set of values seeming incongruous in socialist, post-imperial Britain. In the first heat of attack niceties were thrown overboard in favour of a clear-cut political agenda. Authors who had operated within the framework of old ideas were taken on with a ferocity which paid no attention at all to the true content of their work. Torn down from the pedestal of fame and popular success, they were consigned to the dustbins of history for not having been ahead of their time and questioned the very assumptions which governed their lives. One such author was John Buchan. Enjoying a wide readership at home and in the dominions and being an outstanding public figure who made a secondary career in politics, he was an easy target for dismissive criticism. While some of his books have never been out of print, he virtually disappeared from the literary canon. On the rare occasions when he came in for some attention, this was more often than not negative. Only in recent years, with the growing national awareness of the Scots of their own literary heritage as distinct from that of England, has interest in Buchan revived. Nevertheless, studies of his work are thin on the ground. The writer with such a varied literary legacy and rich output certainly deserves wider critical notice. The present thesis aims to contribute to the better understanding of his work by firmly setting his books and stories in the historical context that shaped them, in the hope of shedding

light on some aspects of it that due to changed sensibilities are no longer readily accessible to the modern reading public.

Before we proceed with Buchan's books, a brief outline of his career would need to be sketched in better to understand his authorial position and concerns. The topic of class and social affiliation are of special interest here, as the thesis will concern itself with a socially determined but supposedly classless ideal and the adoption of it by a wide spectrum of Buchan's protagonists covering all three classes.

Buchan's social background

Buchan was born in 1875 into a lower middle class family. In his autobiography he chose to portray himself as a self-made man of humble origin: "I was one of the poor myself without a penny behind me, compelled to make my way in the world from nearly as bare a start as the lad from the ploughtail or the loom." (1964: 40) Though in a certain sense this is true, his background is nevertheless more complicated. He was the eldest son of an otherworldly Free Kirk minister who was not particularly good with money but had married an able daughter of a prosperous Border farmer who ran her home so economically that they could afford a villa in a good Glasgow suburb and two servants. Buchan senior's father had been a prosperous lawyer and bank manager in Peebles in the Scottish Borders. After the bank he represented crashed, the family lost many of their assets but the family firm continued to operate, was in good time taken over by Buchan's uncle and later by his own younger brother. Buchan, who showed early promise, was sent to Hutcheson's, a good grammar school where he won a scholarship in his first year and could study the next four years free of charge. The same pattern continued when another bursary at sixteen enabled him to go on to Glasgow University and then yet another stipend opened for him the doors of Oxford University. Determined that his education should not cost his family a penny (there were four younger siblings to educate) he supported himself at Oxford entirely by his writing, reading books for his publisher and winning prizes. The rigorous Calvinist work ethic and determination to succeed that he had imbued from home was to remain with him all his life, as did his faith. His summer holidays with his mother's family in the Scottish Borders had given him an intimate feel for the countryside and its inhabitants which the family's love of Scottish history fired with a passionate intensity. To this period belongs his strong affinity with the Border shepherds and farmers and the sundry colourful characters then wandering the roads of Scotland. They people his early stories and the landscape he knew so well provided the backdrop for his first romances featuring Border lairds.

At Oxford his social horizon broadened considerably. Through upper middle class friends he entered the country house circuit and familiarized himself with

aristocratic norms of living. He has later spoken about Oxford having mellowed his character. He certainly had to modify his strict Presbyterianism to accommodate what his generation of young men called hellenism. His new friends were from the upper middle class world of professional politics and the London society who attended the best public schools and came to Oxford in the natural course of events. After graduation they could look forward to prestigious jobs in the city and politics as their birthright. At Oxford their accepted norm of behaviour decreed the adoption of a languid air of agreeable worldliness and an overt lack of ambition which sat uneasily with Buchan's fierce determination to succeed and his habit of hard work. His initial difficulty and hesitation when attempting to reconcile his two worlds comes across well in *The Half-Hearted*, where upper-class conversations at times sound unbearably stilted but this was to pass. Determined to break out of the narrow confines of his background and be at the centre of things where decisions were being made, he was to cultivate his gift of making friends with astounding success, befriending during his political career prime ministers, presidents and even King George V. The good impression he made at the country homes of his friends procured him his first important imperial post among Lord Milner's staff in South Africa. After returning to London he won the hand of Lady Susan Grosvenor and became related through marriage to a number of great aristocratic families, notably, besides the Grosvenors, to the Wellesleys, Stuart-Wortleys, Lyttletons and Talbots. Before going to Canada as Governor-General in 1935 he himself was ennobled as Lord Tweedsmuir of Elsfield because the King was determined that his representative in the dominion should be a peer. The two halves of the title he chose on the occasion reflect the divided loyalties of his affection, his strong adherence to Scotland and his adopted home England. In 1919 he had bought Elsfield Manor in the Cotswolds four miles from Oxford and set about turning himself into a bona fide English country gentleman. He immersed himself in the history of the region and came to know the landscape as intimately as his childhood haunts in the Scottish Borders. The 'Old England' he discovered on his long walks came romantically to life in his historical romances set in England, *Midwinter* and *The Blanket of the Dark*.

His field was broadened further by trips abroad and continuing political activity. His two years with Lord Milner in South Africa alerted him to the problems of the Empire and furnish the backdrop for *Prester John* and *A Lodge in the Wilderness*. He then wanted to join Lord Cromer in Egypt but, there being no vacant post, had to look for a career elsewhere. He joined Nelson Publishers but kept up his political interests writing political journalism and co-founding a dining club aimed at bringing together men interested in imperial affairs. In 1911 he made an attempt to enter big politics by becoming the Unionist Candidate for Peeblesshire and Selkirk in his native Borders. Though he nursed his large constituency faithfully, success eluded him and he had to wait for another chance until 1927 when he was elected Member of Parliament

for the Scottish Universities. His career as an MP was not particularly distinguished, the desired Cabinet post eluding him. His influence was more of an informal kind as an adviser to two prime ministers, Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald, both his friends. His temperament was unsuited to party intrigues, preferring cooperation to confrontation and his emphatically moderate outlook forbid too close an adherence to any party line. His politics were strongly coloured by his experience of the Great War which he had observed at close quarters, first as a war correspondent for *The Times* and *Daily News* and then as Director of Intelligence in the Ministry of Information coordinating official war propaganda. His first-hand knowledge as observer in the field, writer of communiqués at the General Headquarters, long acquaintance with Douglas Haig, the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in France and Flanders, his work for the War Office and Foreign Office and employment in the Intelligence Corps furnished him with material for his then acclaimed but now neglected *Nelson's History of the War* in twenty-four parts and his modern romances or 'shockers' as he playfully called them. The range of locations he could employ had been widened by trips abroad with family and friends. The impressions gained on an overland trip with the Orient Express to Constantinople and on a cruise of the islands in the Aegean were utilized in *Greenmantle* and *The Dancing Floor*. Fishing trips to Norway provided the local colour for *The Three Hostages* and *The Island of Sheep*. A summer holiday in Bavaria would come in handy when writing *Greenmantle*, *A Prince of the Captivity* and the *Huntingtower* trilogy. The groundwork for his proconsulship was laid during his trips to Canada and the USA.

Buchan as a romancer

As a writer Buchan today is classed as Late Victorian and Edwardian mostly, as these were his formative years, his output between the wars being largely ignored. (It is noteworthy and symptomatic, for instance, that V. Cunningham has omitted him completely from his definitive account of the literature of the nineteen thirties). The convenient popular fiction label 'spy thrillers' for much of his mature work tends to obscure the fact that like many of the writers who suffered a similar fate by not belonging to the coterie of 'modernists proper', the peculiar modernity of his work has been overlooked, thus as if denying him development outside his designated period. The reality, of course, defies strict labelling.

Buchan saw himself first and foremost as a historian and biographer. However, as this part of his prodigious legacy falls outside the scope of the present thesis, only the wider period context of his fiction will be traced and his principles of writing imaginative fiction discussed.

The broad generic term for Buchan's books discussed in the present thesis would be 'romance'. He started out as a Late Victorian romancer in the tradition of Scott and Stevenson, both of whom he deeply revered.

'Romance', as J. Sutherland (1990: 542) has pointed out, during the nineteenth century was a largely meaningless term, like its conventional opposite 'realism'. It was a latent tendency rather than a clear-cut genre and only with the more precise definition of 'realism' emerging in the period 1880–1900, was 'romance' used more programmatically. D. Daniell in his ground-breaking study of Buchan's fiction has remarked:

When John Buchan began to write, in the 1890s, the English novel was in a state of disarray, the native tradition of three-volume Victorian romances being challenged by translations from the French naturalist writers and the Scandinavian dramatists simultaneously. By the time he died, the victories for the specifically English novel had been won, producing the "open" rather than the "closed" experience, and fighting out the realism v. romance battle, using some American ammunition. Buchan had a foot in both camps. (1975: xviii)

He goes on to argue that Buchan understood clearly the tensions between romance and realism, knew how both genres worked and deliberately combined the two:

The black and white of romance became blurred, the separated chemicals interacted, until romance took on the qualities of realism. (Ibid.: xix)

To understand Buchan's peculiar brand of romance we should perhaps look at what he admired in and borrowed from his predecessors. He was indebted to a number of authors and freely acknowledges the debt. His first allegiance was to Sir Walter Scott, the founder of the historical romance, for he himself, in the words of a friend, "lived most willingly in the realm of the historical imagination" (Rowse 1948: 184). In *The Man and the Book: Sir Walter Scott* he speaks about Scott's contribution to romance in terms which highlight his own priorities when working in the genre:

He selected a particular kind of subject – the rougher and stranger and more coloured aspects of life, the subjects which we call "romantic". That word, when he began to write, was getting a bad name, for it was associated with the feebly fantastic in the writings of Mrs. Radcliffe and Horace Walpole and "Monk" Lewis. Scott gave it a new definition. He showed that beauty and terror could be made credible, because he made them the natural outcome, as in a Greek tragedy, of the clash of character. To do this, he had to develop his characters so that they stood out alive and four-square in his narrative, and he had to keep that narrative always in touch with ordinary life. His greatness consists in the fact that to a soaring imagination and profound emotions he joined common sense – the vision of the plain man: that he was an adventurer and a dreamer who never forgot the standards of ordinary humanity.

In all his work he has a foundation of plain good sense. He never loses his head. The fantastic and the grotesque are heightened in their effect by being shown against this quiet background. Further, they are made credible by being thus linked to our ordinary world. He is a master of the eccentric and the uncanny, just because his outlook is so sane and central, for only a mind solidly founded on fact can bring mystery out of cloudland into our common life. Even when he is a seer, dreaming strange dreams, he is also a Scots lawyer considering his case. (1925: 38–39)

A reader of any number of Buchan's books would instantly recognize in these lines Buchan's own principles of writing modern romance. Similarly would they be alive to the speaker's affinity with Scott when Buchan discusses Scott's combination of realism and romance:

Scott transforms life, as is the duty of a great artist. He enlarges our view and makes the world at once more solemn and more sunlit, but it remains a recognizable world, with all the old familiar landmarks. He has that touch of the prosaic in him without which romance becomes only a fairy tale and tragedy a high-heeled strutting. For the kernel of romance is contrast – beauty and valour flowering in unlikely places, the heavenly rubbing shoulders with the earthly. All romance, all tragedy, must be within hailing distance of our humdrum lives. (Ibid.: 40)

Stevenson, to quote D. Daniell, had revitalized the ancient form of northern romance, reworked by Scott, and turned it into “a tough, vital, hard-edged masculine fiction which moved fast but caught a lot of material from the depths of psychological understanding” (1975: xviii). M. Bradbury (1994: 47) has stressed Stevenson's importance in challenging the predominance of documentary Naturalism in the 1880s, his defence of ‘romance’ and his re-exploration of the Gothic, reinstating myth and the exotic as viable options in the expanding field of fiction. The enormous success of his *Treasure Island* inspired his followers from Henty and Haggard to Kipling and others to develop as a genre “a boy's tale of male quest” (ibid.), preferably in an exotic imperial setting. Besides, Stevenson was a rebel against the Presbyterian realism current in Scotland at the time and had made a name for himself with adventurous travels abroad. This must have struck a responsive chord in Buchan who likewise was to rebel against the narrow confines of strict Calvinism and escape into the world of daydream and fantasy. He particularly disliked the sentimental and parochial Kailyard school of mushy Scottish provincial realism and was determined to broaden his horizon to include the greater British Isles and the Empire. Having praised Stevenson in an obituary for having left to the men of his age “an example of manly and chivalrous life” (quoted in Green 1990: 68), a pose he became suspicious of later when he outgrew his influence, in one respect Stevenson's influence was nevertheless going to be profound and lasting. In his autobiography he writes how Stevenson had appealed to his generation as a fellow spirit perennially young at heart. This was a quality

Buchan would treasure and cultivate in his fiction and life. His heroes are always young or youngish men who embark on adventure with the zest of an enthusiastic boy. Even when aged in years and dulled in sensibility, when adventure comes their way they shed the burden of experience and embrace it with the vigour of youth. For Buchan had been determined from the start to take the side of youth against hide-bound tradition.

M. Green, in his *A Biography of John Buchan and His Sister Anna. The Personal Background of Their Literary Work* (1990: iv–v, 1–17, 151–168) has dissected the paradoxical fate that has befallen Buchan the literary rebel who was determined to break out of the mould of Victorianism and was after his death branded the last of the Victorians by the well-meaning Gertrud Himmel-farb when Buchan’s popularity was at its nadir. His tone is characteristically apologetic both for having picked such a controversial subject as a forgotten popular novelist and for belonging to the 1950s generation of academics who had first rebelled against Buchan after having derived tremendous enjoyment from his books when growing up. Today, when we need not be so peevish, postmodernism having rehabilitated popular fiction, it is both instructive and illuminating for our purposes to observe what his generation rebelled against in Buchan’s writing and what his analysis tells us about the state of gentlemanly values in Buchan’s day and now.

He starts by delineating the two hostile camps – modernists and traditionalists or highbrow and middlebrow – affiliation with which determined one’s literary fate in the academe of the 1950s. The academe (“[n]owadays we (i.e. students of literature) are all highbrows” (1990: 151)) has traditionally prided itself on its liberal views which were in those days defined in opposition to what were perceived as obsolete “nice” values, i.e. “the code of the gentleman class, or the code that caste imposed on others” (ibid.: v). Having been brought up to believe in these values, the Angry Young Men of Green’s generation started their literary careers by repudiating Buchan and his sister, similarly a popular novelist who wrote under the pen name Olivia Douglas. Now that he feels that “nasty” values have taken over large areas of British life, he thinks we might benefit by at least looking at what those “nice” values were.

His analysis takes him back to the generation of the Buchan siblings’ parents whom he describes as having lived out their lives as part of heroic moral drama of cosmic dimensions. This heroic side owed its magnitude to the great Disruption of 1843 when four hundred and seventy four ministers of the Church of Scotland walked out of their church’s General Assembly in protest of what they saw as the church’s concessions to the secular world. The conflict had been brewing for some time, the Evangelicals desiring a clear split between the church and the state. Instead, what they achieved was a split inside their church, for more than seven hundred ministers remained loyal to the established church. In defiance, the disestablished Free Kirk set about building its own churches and schools to rival those of the established church. The Free Kirk saw itself as

the true inheritor of the spirit of John Knox and the Covenanters and cast the Disruption Fathers as saintly martyrs. Theologically the Free Kirk was conservative, Temperance and Sabbatarianism being its two great moral drives. Green argues that Buchan and his sister rebelled against this high moral drama which governed their lives as children of a Free Kirk minister in ways that today need not be obvious, which has misled critics into casting Buchan and his sister as arch-conservative traditionalists.

Their rebellion was muted, even “muffled”, as Green calls it. The “nice” values they upheld in their fiction were those of their parents but with a change of emphasis. Green identifies this difference as lack of heroism when compared to the high religious drama their parents saw themselves as participating in daily. He even goes so far as to say that Buchan’s adventurers “are not *moral* heroes” (ibid.: 6), in the sense the Disruption Fathers were for his parents. The present writer finds this phrase not very fortuitous in our age of ethical confusion, though she understands the emphasis and the need for such a distinction. Green wants to show that by opting not to be overtly moralistic, Buchan and his sister chose modernity over tradition and thus as if to defend them against charges of undue conservatism. This actually does them a disservice for it seems to suggest that there was room for moral relativism in their books which is definitely not true. All Buchan’s heroes, the subjects of the present study, not once err against the principles of Christian morality and the villains, when they do so, are fully aware of the enormity of their transgression.

Green is at pains to summon evidence for his case and in the process he helpfully points out those facets of Buchan’s writing that link him with modernity and place him more fairly in the early twentieth century tradition of anti-Victorian rebellion. The overall term for the different characteristic facets he singles out for discussion in the Buchan siblings’ writings under “nice” values would be “moral reticence” though he does not use it. He points out their hostility to heavy rhetoric, understatement in moral style, aversion to the explicit presentation of sex or violence, lack of cruelty and grossness, discreet and non-declarative patriotism, moderation and consideration in stating one’s views, gentle humour and irony.

These understated, non-heroic ethics are naturally slangy in expression and they shaped their corresponding style. In reaction against Victorian massiveness, both in form as well as mood, they kept their books short and light. Green argues that they consciously banished from their writing and thought the pomposity, severity and moral vindictiveness of the Victorian sages, but also the historical romanticism of the Celtic revival. The present writer does not fully agree here. They may have made the conscious effort to differ but the cultural climate in which they wrote was still so imbued with the ideas expounded by the great thinkers who had shaped the Late-Victorian tradition that, as will be seen below, they underlie many assumptions at least in John Buchan’s works. Carlylean heroism, Ruskinian attention to the natural

surroundings, Tennysonian treatment of love are strong presences in his books and short stories, as is the intensely romantic affiliation with the lost causes of the Celtic Highlanders. Yet it is certainly true, as Green points out, that the use of genteel slang by the brother and sister signifies a break with their parents' tradition, modesty and playfulness being the keywords of their approach. For them theirs was a consciously modern code of values but it is also true that they found the radical remaking of tradition, what we today call modernism, offensive.

The values Buchan and his sister upheld were the traditional middle class ones which they had inherited from their parents and were not rebelling against. This would today classify them as “middle-brow” and “middle of the road” defenders of tradition in opposition to the “highbrows” intent on breaking tradition. Green claims that the brother and sister consciously chose the road of affirmation in opposition to what they saw as a trend inimical to tradition and the civic values they cherished. This is especially noticeable in their fiction of the 1920s and 30s when they were deliberately swimming against the current of taste. The Great War had played a huge part in their lives (they had lost a brother and many friends) and they found the post-war flippant and cynical climate unacceptable. To quote Green:

In 1919 Buchan said, “Everywhere in the world was heard the sound of things breaking.” The things he meant were treaties, laws, contracts, customs. More generally, but quite palpably, the sense of what was important, valuable, true, in work and play, love and duty, war and peace, life and death, was breaking down. This was reflected and reinforced, for him, in all the forms of cultural expression, of which the chief one for the Buchans was books. Highbrow authors expressed this discord and breakdown in such a way as to amplify it. John and his sister set out to strike the opposite note, that of things whole and sound and well-tuned, the sound of harmony – both gay and sad – to give everyone a keynote to which to tune their own instruments, so that music could fill the land again.

They did so by means of their gift in language, above all in narrative. They did not claim to be creating works of art, since that portentous value had been aggressively appropriated by their enemies, but they hoped nevertheless to occupy their readers' imagination. /.../

The Buchans wanted to show people the old values, in action again, adapted to modern conditions. They did not want their readers to go back to the old creeds and prohibitions of their parents /.../ They were rebels themselves against Puritanism, and even advocates of a kind of erotic and hedonistic values /.../ But they saw an equal and greater danger in the reckless hedonism of the post-war years; in frequent divorce, fashionable drunkenness, orgiastic dancing, and the general contempt for or boredom with institutions like the Royal Family, Sunday church, War medals, and – perhaps most important – the commemoration of the dead. They hoped to display fictional characters who, while claiming a new freedom and moral ease, preserved the essence of the old values, an essence

made manifest in an austere conscience that would be directed only inwards, at themselves. (1990: 166–168)

In the 1940s such a position brought them great popularity, in the 1950s reaction set in. Left-wing critics found their attitudes suspect, even Fascist. In John Buchan's case Green points out some possible causes, the principal probably being the soldierly component in his books. No matter how bloodless and unaggressive they were, this reminded the critics uncomfortably of war. Buchan's especial strength, his skill when rendering the landscape and its effect on the protagonists, his awareness of the *genius loci* and its semi-divine power over men, linked him with the erotic and the irrational and again earned the left-wingers' disapproval. The masterful rendering of bodily states which are not related to sex but nature and the environment, a trait which links him strongly with Stevenson, to highbrow critics who search for this kind of intensity in sexual relationships, seemed misplaced. (Ibid.: 170–173) More was to follow. A. Lownie, in his recent biography of John Buchan (1995: 282–298), has traced Buchan's critical recovery in the post-war years from off-hand charges of imperialism, anti-Semitism, racism and the cult of success to the more balanced reputation of a minor classic of adventure fiction and the founder of the modern spy thriller tradition. The afore-mentioned charges, the result of wilful misreading, have been refuted as unfounded, with great thoroughness and sympathy, above all, by Buchan's first biographer J. Adam Smith. They will also be dealt with in the present thesis when dictated by the needs of analysis and to the extent they are related to the overall theme. In recent years the critical opinion has favourably singled out Buchan's preoccupation with the fragility of the civilized world (R. Carter & J. McRae 1997: 389), his interest in primitive survivals (R. Crawford 1992: 265), his idyllic settings (*Benét's Readers' Encyclopedia* 1987: 136), his clean, often too-noble idealism in his romances and the imaginative soundness of his historical work (S. J. Kunitz & H. Haycraft 1991: 213) and even the debt owed by I. Fleming's James Bond to Buchan's modern adventure stories (Cannadine 2003: 279–311). However, he is still silently passed over, for instance, in A. Sanders's overall history of English literature (2004) or M. Dodsworth's history of literature in the twentieth century (1992). His reception is mixed in the Canadian context, N. Story (1967: 114) concentrating on his adventure fiction and the philosophical overtones of *Sick Heart River*, W. Toye (1983: 270) writing off Buchan's attempts at integrating philosophical themes in the latter as conventional melodrama.

Perhaps it is instructive at this stage to hear Buchan's own views about his position in relation to modernism and what he esteemed in his predecessors. In *Memory Hold-the-Door*, when looking back at his career as a man of letters, he remarks rather bitterly:

My taste was for things old and shabby and unpopular, and I regarded with scepticism whatever was acclaimed as the Spirit of the Age. I was born to be always out of fashion. (1964: 157)

In the chapter “An Ivory Tower and Its Prospects” he defines his position in relation to what he sees as the modern malaise in no uncertain terms. Having done his civic duty during the war, he had developed “an intense craving for a country life” and putting down roots at Elsfield in Oxfordshire had brought “a new-found delight in the rhythm of nature, and in small homely things after so many alien intensities” (ibid.: 191). The house and the countryside around it were steeped in history and he found himself becoming “most historically minded”:

My old interest in philosophy was ebbing. I had had enough for the moment of theories and speculations, and I had certainly had enough of changes. When the future is uncertain the mind turns naturally to the certainties of the past, and finds comfort in what is beyond the peril of change. /.../ I wanted the sense of continuity, the assurance that our contemporary blunders were endemic in human nature, that our new fads were very ancient heresies, that beloved things which were threatened had rocked not less heavily in the past. (Ibid.: 191–192)

Looking back at the intellectual climate of the two interwar decades, he seems most to have been put off by the moral and ethical confusion for which he as a man of firm principles and unshaken faith could have had little sympathy:

The intellectual atmosphere of the immediate post-War period was enough to drive the ordinary man into privacy. While plain folk everywhere set themselves sturdily to rebuild their world, the interpreting class, which Coleridge called the “clerisy,” the people who should have influenced opinion, ran round their cages in vigorous pursuit of their tails. If they were futile they were also arrogant, and it was an odd kind of arrogance, for they had no creed to preach. The same type before the War had prostrated themselves in gaping admiration of the advance of physical science and the improvements in the material apparatus of life. There was little of that left. The War had shown that our mastery over physical forces might end in a nightmare, that mankind was becoming like an overgrown child armed with deadly weapons, a child with immense limbs and a tiny head. But this belated enlightenment seemed to drain their vitality. Just as many of the boys then leaving school, who had escaped war service, suffered from a kind of *accidie* and were inclined to look for soft “options” in life, so the interpreting class plumed themselves wearily on being hollow men living in a waste land. (Ibid.: 192–193)

He can certainly understand their plight for they had invested their faith in the omnipotence of reason and the march of science and when the War had shown these creeds to be unsustainable, they had no other world to turn to. As they would admit no absolute values, theirs could not be a well-structured world. The props of their rational convictions gone, theirs is a necessarily insecure and haunted existence, much like that of the people in the Middle Ages but without

the support of the medieval faith. Various evils follow from this. Those who live in perpetual fear, rule out of their lives many human interests as triflings unworthy of attention in such precarious times. Their insistence on living only in the present, a quality cherished as a virtue in itself, reduces the power of the word to the merely descriptive and frankness, now reserved for bodily functions, to “a dull farmyard candour” (ibid.: 195). This disagreeable pose, an arrogant and callow disregard for the past, lack of moral and intellectual balance which results in a proneness to extremes and fondness for violent change, is for Buchan essentially a revolt against humanism, “a return to the sourness of Puritanism without its discipline and majesty” (ibid.). It might be of interest to note here that *Witch Wood*, written in the same period, examines the debased face of Godless Puritanism in its extreme form, and a number of Buchan’s short stories deal with the fate of protagonists who give themselves completely over to the cult of bodily sensations with dire results, as will be seen below. Similarly, the intellectual anarchy and the craving for order and law of the communist and fascist kind which grows out of it, was for Buchan a deeply worrying trend and one of his last novels, *A Prince of the Captivity*, is dedicated wholly to an attempt to find a solution to the impasse.

In a lecture entitled *The Novel and the Fairy Tale*, delivered to the English Association and published in 1931 in the heyday of anti-Victorian iconoclasm, Buchan expounded his then “highly unorthodox” (1931: 3) views on what makes the Victorian novelists so pre-eminent. In the process of tracing the elements of the fairy tale in the prose compositions of the great Victorians, he also sheds light on the principles that govern his own fiction. He starts by quoting a passage from Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria* about the need of poetry to lend the charm of novelty to everyday things and awaken the mind from the lethargy of custom to the fresh appreciation of the inexhaustible treasury which is the world. Coleridge speaks about Wordsworth’s poetry but Buchan extends it to develop “a whole philosophy of the art of fiction”:

Fiction deals with ordinary life; but, without ever losing touch with the ground, it must somehow lift it into the skies. It must give it for us an air of novelty and strangeness and wonder, by showing beauty in unlikely places, courage where one would not have looked for it, the jewel in the pig’s snout, the flower on the dunghill. A poet like Milton or Dante brings cosmic sublimities within hail of our common life; a great novelist makes our common life itself cosmic and sublime. (Ibid.: 5)

If this general purpose is to be attained, certain rules must be observed. The first concerns the method by which life is presented. To the “certain modern critics” complaint that Victorians sentimentalised life by telling a selective truth about it and are thus not as realistic as they might have been had they allowed life to speak for itself “in all its crudeness and confusion” without the arbitrary intercession of the novelist’s will, Buchan has this to say:

Well, I would remark that on that principle you will get an inventory, not a work of art. The business of art is to present life, the real point of life, and for that selection is necessary, since a great deal of life is off the point. It must clear away the surplusage of the irrelevant, the inessential, the inorganic. It must provide the only true kind of picture, which is an interpretation. (Ibid.)

He suspects that the real objection levelled at the Victorians is that they were not ugly enough and did not pay enough attention to the pathologies of life. But that would be like preferring to the house its adjacent dust-heap:

They were too deeply interested in humanity to be obsessed by that side which humanity shares with the brute creation. They were too interested in the human soul to give all their time to its perversities and vagaries. (Ibid.)

While paradoxically, after the great renunciation of the self during the war, the modern writers are supremely egocentric, forever wrestling with their moods and tinkering with their emotions, they hardly ever rise to the self-forgetfulness of greater art. The Victorian artist, to the contrary, was “sublimely unconscious”:

He was absorbed with life and lived fiercely in his characters. He was not a showman exhibiting a set of puppets, boring his audience by telling it constantly what he felt about it. (Ibid.: 6)

The impulse to enliven the actual workaday life by inventing tales of another kind of world which is familiar yet glorified, where life is more dramatic and pleasing and the unfeasible might come true is age-old and found expression first in folk tales or fairy tales. Buchan argues that the novel, which is the modern equivalent of these less sophisticated tales, can fully succeed only in so far as it is akin to the folk tale, and it must be so in five important aspects.

Firstly, it must tell a good story. – “something which grips and enthral the reader, with true drama and wonder in it” (ibid.: 7). The number of good plots in the world is very limited, as is the number of motives. Two of these are of particular interest to us as they are instantly recognizable as being prominently present in Buchan’s own books. The first is the picaresque motive:

The hero may be a pure adventurer in the void, waiting to see what turns up; or he may have a serious quest to find something or somebody that is lost, to unravel a mystery, to marry a lady of fame whose beauty has reached him. And the thing may be done seriously or in a spirit of comedy. It may stick close to earth or adventure into the clouds. The road may be a pleasant and bustling highway running past windmills and gardens and farms and little towns, or a mysterious path through enchanted forests. The one thing common to them all is the conviction that the world is full of surprising things and that anything may happen to the adventurer. (Ibid.: 8)

The second is what Buchan calls the Survival of the Unfittest motive – the victory against odds of the unlikeliest people. It rests on the incurable optimism

of human nature and the conviction that the impossible can and would happen to happily fated people who have more luck, courage or dexterity than others or are simply blessed by gods. The scales must be heavily weighted against the hero and the task made as difficult as possible to get the full drama out of the hero's struggles. The two other motives he brings out are Aristotle's *Peripeteia* and *Anagnorisis*, the Reversal of Fortune and Recognition, which he too utilises with great effect but which are not central to our topic.

Secondly, the characters should be recognizable as real types and the author should pass judgement on his characters and do it clearly and unequivocally by dividing them into the good and the bad:

The characters are human beings, and represent humanity in its central region, and not in its remote suburbs. The old story-teller was not interested in freaks. He understood a great villain and a great hero, but above all things he understood ordinary men, and he makes them reveal their character in their deeds, and does not make any pother about describing it. /.../ Now this seems to me to be the very essence of good fiction. I have read novels by able men and women in which the characters could not get started to do anything because of the meshes of analytic psychology with which their feet were clogged. Pages of tortuous analysis had to be waded through before the hero could kiss his wife or eat his breakfast. The trick of dissecting a character before a reader's eyes seems to me abominably bad craftsmanship. The business of the novelist is to make men and women reveal themselves in speech and action, to play the showman as little as possible, to present the finished product, and not to print the jottings of his laboratory. (Ibid.: 10–11)

The tellers of folk tales and great Victorian novelists were not afraid of clear moral outlines (so different of the "moral molluscs of certain fictions of to-day") and neither were they afraid of greatness in their characters:

The folk tale is not afraid of greatness. It believes that humanity is not a drab collection of mediocrities, but that nearly everybody has some poetry in him, and that it can flower at times into something which leaves the earth altogether and strikes the stars. Because it believed in human nature it believed that human nature could transcend itself and become god-like. Its heroes are so full of vitality that no giant or dragon or wicked stepmother manages to hamper them in the long run. They go their appointed course with a divine carelessness. They are immortal until they have fulfilled their purpose. (Ibid.: 11)

Thirdly, Victorian novels and folk tales may be prolix but they are never confused. There is no fumbling for correct details to imprint a scene on the reader's memory and the main story lines are always crystal clear.

Fourthly, the folk tale and the great Victorian novel are unselfconscious creations. The story-tellers in both are primarily interested in the events they have to tell of and not their reactions to them. They do not stop to obtrude their own moods or lay bare their souls.

Lastly, they have a dominant purpose and the same purpose:

The Victorian novels and the folk tales are not mere transcripts of life – they are interpretations of life, and they are interpretations of life in a hopeful spirit. In a folk tale the plain man comforted himself in his difficulties by showing that the weak thing of the earth can confound the strong; that nothing is impossible to the courageous and single-hearted; that the unfittest in the worldly sense can survive if he is the fittest in more important respects. They are the glorification of the soul of man, an epic of the resurgence of the divine in human nature. They make the world a happier place because they show it interpenetrated by hope and opportunity.

The great novelists do the same thing by subtler methods. With them it is not the good fairy that solves the problems, but something unconquerable in the human spirit. They make the world more solemn, for they show the darkest places in it. /.../ But if they make life more solemn they also make it brighter. They enlarge our vision, light up dark corners, break down foolish barriers, and make the world more sunlit and spacious. /.../ They revive hope in humanity by revealing its forgotten graces and depths. They are optimists in the largest sense, for without optimism there can be no vitality. (Ibid.: 14)

Luckily, in our own day, the reputation of the major modernist writers being securely established, “there is no plausible justification, if there ever was, for the sectarian dismissiveness with which literary modernism has been formerly defended”, argues C. Baldick in *The Modern Movement*. In his opinion this should facilitate at last a “non-partisan re-examination” of the modernists themselves and also “the relaxed appreciation of significant merit” of other writers who wrote in the same period “without having to fear that we may be betraying the cause of Art”, for “the age of highbrow vigilance against “Edwardian” tastes and middlebrow entertainment has also passed” (2005: 400). He himself treats Buchan under the broad label ‘modern romance’. Another helpful label – ‘adventure romance’ – has been provided by C. Bloom in *Spy Thrillers* (1990: 1). Helpful as these are, they, as usual, need qualifying in order not to distort the picture unduly.

“I hanker after my own notion of romance,” says Leighton in *The Dancing Floor* (1997: 5) and the same can be said of his creator. He was to try a number of formulas before he honed to near perfection his version of the modern adventure story (‘near perfection’ because he was constantly attempting to add to the formula and extend the genre in various directions to make it something more than mere ‘romance’, not always to happy effect). Once he had settled on the type of light fiction he felt comfortable with, reserving his more laborious efforts for biography and history, he liked to refer to his holiday books (for that is what they were meant to be, Hodder & Stoughton regularly issuing a Buchan for the summer holidays in the 1920s and 1930s) light-heartedly as “pure minstrelsy” and call himself merely a “bard” (Alastair Buchan 1948: 290, Anna Buchan 1950: 144). It had not always been so.

As a young author under the influence of Stevenson, he had tried to combine adventure and psychological insight with the study of how Ruskinian close

observation and description of nature can convey mood in *Sir Quixote of the Moors* (1895). *John Burnet of Barns* (1898), heavily indebted to Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, with a dash of R. D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doon*, is at pains to establish the moderate creed in religion and politics of the protagonist and the author, achieving its best effects not in its story-line which flags unpardonably at first but in its convincing rendering of the exhilaration of a physically active young man who has the freedom (he is on the run from authorities) to explore to his heart's content the natural beauties of his native Tweed valley. The same joy in the landscape pervades the early short stories set in the Borders, any adventurous component in them being quite incidental. *A Lost Lady of Old Years* (1899) is rather an ambitious study, with a nod to French naturalists, of heredity but with a positive note, the degeneracy of parents not being able to ruin the inherent noble qualities of the hero. It is also an attempt, among other things, to understand or vindicate some of the controversial characters of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. *The Half-Hearted* (1900) is Buchan's first literary foray into the world of old Border aristocrats and modern middle-class plutocrats which aspires to be also a study of the contemporary political scene and especially the peculiar mindset of the educated young men of his generation who vacillated between action and inaction, settling the debate in favour of action on the political and military frontiers of the Empire. *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906), here included because of its hero, is not a romance at all but a novel of ideas, occasioned by the electoral defeat of the New Imperialists whose creed Buchan had come to share after serving on Lord Milner's staff in South Africa.

It is with *Prester John* (1910) that we see Buchan adopting the pure adventure tale format then favoured by the *Boy's Own Paper* and similar venues for adolescent adventure and bearing a strong imprint of Ryder Haggard's Allan Quatermain stories. However, this is strictly speaking his only colonial/imperial romance and a large part of the interest is vested not in the white hero but his black adversary who is treated with admiration and awe, a novel trait at the time. Here, too, the first tentative 'band of brothers' appears, a group of like-minded fellows who venture on a mission into the enemy territory to solve a riddle and save that portion of the world which is entrusted to their care. This approach is developed further in *Salute to Adventurers* which could also be classified as a colonial romance, for it takes place in pre-republican America. Here the group is more closely knit and responsibilities are more evenly distributed, one of the fellows emerging as a master of exotic disguise. An additional interest in the book is provided by the historical component, the little known episode of the trade war between English and Scottish merchants in the early days of settlement on the American seaboard.

A new departure which also brought along a dramatic increase in his sales was *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, a spy thriller and an invasion-scare story which successfully synthesized influences from Erskine Childers, William le Queux

and E. P. Oppenheim to produce a suspense story of a new type. Elements of the invasion scare stories are present already in *The Half-Heaterd* where the hero foils a Russian attempt to secretly invade India and thus saves the British Empire from destruction. In *Prester John* a little group of white men save the white settlers of South Africa from extinction at the hands black insurgents. In *Salute to Adventurers* the same happens to the vulnerable little white colony on the sea shore who are about to be pushed into the sea by the Indians of the interior. With impending war in Europe the odds are pitched higher and the stakes are even bigger, civilization itself being under threat. The invasion scare story had come into being after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. Sir George Chesney in *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) had introduced into English fiction the theme of the foreign invasion of England by a hostile and conquering army. The identity of the enemy was to vary, until the arms race with Germany made the choice obvious. By far the greatest classic of the new genre, which B. Aldiss has called the ‘Dreadful Warnings’ novel (1973: 102), is Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) which shows two young English gentlemen, while yachting in the Baltic Sea, uncovering secret German preparations for the invasion of England behind the protective chain of the Frisian Islands. William Le Queux was one of the most prolific exponents of the invasion scare story, his *The Great War in England in 1897* (1892) and *The Invasion of 1910* (1906) being phenomenally popular. A self-proclaimed expert on the secret service, he plays a large part in the evolution of the spy thriller. In *England’s Peril* (1893) a French spy tries to get his hands on England’s defence secrets by blackmailing an English girl whose lover, who is accused of being a spy himself, rescues her with the help of the British Secret Service. In *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England* (1909) two English lawyers expose a network of German spies to such a great effect that excited letters from readers who claimed to have recognized German spies made their way to the War Office where they were used to boost the campaign of its counter-intelligence section against indifference to the German threat. E. P. Oppenheim, in his passionate concern for the safety of England launched, in his own words, “almost a crusade against the menace of German militarism” (1941: 27–28). He is credited with having written the first spy novel, *Mysterious Mr Sabine* (1898), which “inaugurated his successful formula of thrilling intrigue and espionage in high and cosmopolitan places” (Sutherland 1990: 480). The trouble with the invasion scare story formula, as S. Kemp, Ch. Mitchell and D. Trotter have shown (1997: 370–371), was that the British always lost:

What was needed was a moral and political regeneration without the bitter fruit of humiliating defeat but the germ of victory. Fortunately, however, invasion had its acknowledged preliminaries. The theorists agreed that its success would depend on secret preparations. There would be no invasion, in short, without spies. /.../ If writers were to exploit spy fever for political and commercial ends, they had to devise a new kind of hero: one who would adequately represent a

nation which, although sunk in decadence, was still sound at heart, and likely to respond to the scent of battle. They found that hero in the amateur agent or accidental spy, the sleepy young Englishman whose complacency is shattered when he stumbles across some fiendish plot. Contending with the unsportsmanlike conduct of his enemies and the disbelief of his friends, he learns what it is to be like to be an outsider; the rite of passage regenerates him morally, while the evidence he has accumulated provokes a political awakening.

This is precisely the kind of formula Buchan adopted for his modern adventure stories after 1914 which he playfully called the ‘shockers’. He shares with Oppenheim a love of intrigue in high places, his heroes likewise operating in the circles of international diplomacy and secret service. They fight mad foreign megalomaniacs to save civilization and he similarly lets the reader identify with the ordinary man caught up in the turmoil of epoch-making intrigue. (Ibid.: 302) Oppenheim’s world is an extremely glamorous one of ocean liners, grand hotels, casinos and embassies. Buchan would bring it considerably closer to earth and, as G. Green has pointed out, was “the first to realize the enormous dramatic value of adventure in familiar surroundings happening to unadventurous men” (quoted in Lownie 1996: 4).

The Thirty-Nine Steps, the first of Buchan’s spy thrillers, is today a classic and has never been out of print. It introduced Richard Hannay, the reluctant amateur spy to the public and is a radical departure from his earlier manner. Everything superfluous to the story line has been eliminated, the action moves swiftly and verges constantly on the incredible. The same hectic space is kept up in its sequel *Greenmantle* but here, as in later books, Buchan finds it increasingly hard to keep out topical concerns and concentrate only on the fabulous. Some critics have seen this as a drawback, for instance C. Baldick thinks the later Hannay books “marred by moralizing and by allegorical conceits” (2005: 284). For the student of the period, however, they are a rich treasure trove of attitudes and concerns which were then widely spread and which are missing or downplayed in the more radical experimental writing. One of the great charms of *Greenmantle* is the historical background written into the novel, especially of the German and Turkish episodes, which have a ring of authenticity, for Buchan was using first-hand knowledge, gained as a war correspondent, about the Erzerum campaign. A similar kind of immediacy brings to life the pages of *Mr. Standfast* devoted to the reality of the trenches of the Somme during the catastrophic German advance in the spring of 1918, again experienced first-hand. Not always could Buchan live up to the high demands he set his fiction. When he was out of his depth, he could fail to convince, despite his best intentions. The feeble, though funny, analysis of pacifism in the first chapters of *Mr. Standfast* is a good example. *The Three Hostages* fails really to convince that the kidnapping of three children, no matter how important, can truly shake the foundations of civilization but Buchan deserves credit for drawing attention to the new sort of crime the demoralised after-war

world was making possible. *The Courts of the Morning* gets out of hand at times when Buchan gets carried away describing the campaigns of a civil war in a fictional South American dictatorship but is enthralling when describing the sublimity of its imaginary landscapes. *The Island of Sheep* has a similarly weak intrigue but a wealth of memorable scenery. Rather surprisingly, to the knowledge of the present author critics have not found parallels here with Ann Radcliffe's way of looking at things, probably fearing that this might somehow harm Buchan the writer of serious male fiction. (Buchan has himself put them off the scent too by having Leithen dismiss traditional romance as stale and pawed by fools in *The Dancing Floor*). Of the related Leithen books (the heroes know each other and attend the same clubs), *The Power-House*, *John Macnab*, *The Gap in the Curtain*, *The Dancing Floor* and *The Sick Heart River*, only the first is really a thriller. The rest we might call meditative romances of various kinds. *John Macnab*, Buchan's most entertaining and funny holiday book, is really a comedy which hinges on mistaken identities. But it also touches the serious and painful question of the decline of great aristocratic families who have forfeited their right to rule by having become inactive. *The Dancing Floor*, which ostensibly deals with the rescue of a young girl from a Greek island, is also an exploration of the melancholy passions of the middle age, Leithen being forced to give up his last chance of happiness in a contest with a younger man. *The Sick Heart River* stands altogether apart as a grave meditation on the nature of life and death and reaffirms powerfully Buchan's Calvinist faith he had forbidden to intrude into his earlier writing. It stands today as his literary testament and a book which offers a singular glimpse, by proxy, into the inner core of Buchan's private self. *The Gap in the Curtain* and many of the stories of his maturity are explorations of uncanny phenomena and can be classed together under the label of visionary romances, to use C. Baldick's term. *The Gap in the Curtain* scrutinizes the psychological consequences of imagined time travel on four protagonists, while the short stories of Buchan's middle years selected for analysis in this thesis mostly examine the insidious workings of *Natura Benigna* and *Natura Maligna* on unsuspecting individuals. A case yet apart is *A Prince of the Captivity* the central concern of which is to find a political solution to deal with the emerging dictatorships of the 1930s.

A rather interesting and now dated subgroup would be the three 'Ruritanian' romances – *Huntingtower*, *Castle Gay* and *The House of the Four Winds* – that trace the romantic awakening of an elderly Glasgow greengrocer Dickson McCunn and the transformation of three street urchins from the slums into respectable citizens. The genre was already faded when Buchan picked it up, the formula of Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) having been quite exhausted by excessive imitation.

The same applies to the genre of historical romance where Scott's example had been flogged to near death during the Victorian period when historical romances were all the rage. By the Edwardian period they had shifted somewhat

down-market, Stevenson, Haggard and Henty and their followers aiming their books at the juvenile reader. It continued to be one of the most popular yet the least honoured of literary genres, usually treated as a mere costume drama. The favoured settings tended to be pre-Victorian and the action was built around famous historical personages or epoch-making events. Buchan's historical romances which form a distinct subgroup in his oeuvre fit the bill here, *The Blanket of the Dark* being set in the reign of Henry VIII, *Witch Wood* during the Civil War, *Midwinter* in 1745 and *The Free Fishers* in the Regency period. As a historian Buchan took researching the background very seriously and though they are all tales of adventure, as is common with Buchan elsewhere, within the framework of romance serious concerns are addressed. *The Blanket of the Dark*, which deals with a conspiracy to overthrow Henry VIII, examines the nature of power, *Witch Wood* is a grim study of religious extremism, *Midwinter* is a homage to 'Old England' and *The Free Fishers* an idealistic and humorous study of differences in the national character of the Scots and English. *The Path of the King*, a collection of related historical vignettes, bears testimony to Buchan's extremely romantic view of history as it undertakes to illustrate the most salient points in the achievement of the 'island race' according to the then prevalent Whig view of history.

Buchan's heroes and chivalry

Broadly speaking, Buchan's books discussed in the present thesis can be called 'romances of truancy', to use C. Baldick's term (2005: 213). They are narratives of holiday escapade or exotic truancy when for a brief period of time the hero escapes from the routine of everyday reality into a world of romantic adventure. Differently from the more wildly fabulous visionary or mystical romances, these are modest romances of the semi-realistic kind where the action verges on the probable and the world the protagonists inhabit is recognizably our own.

The immediate predecessor of romances of this kind in the English canon would be the picaresque novel in its eighteenth and nineteenth-century guises. The ultimate source, however, from which all other modifications spring would be the medieval romance of knight errantry. This is nowhere more evident than in their structure. Similarly to the medieval tale of a knight's adventuring, their essential formal medium is adventure. The medieval romance itself follows a clear pattern and addresses concerns already familiar from the folk tale. As W. R. J. Barron has shown in *English Medieval Romance* (1987: 3–5), the central concerns of both are maturation through struggle, manifestation of one's independence from parental influence, self-realization, the establishment of a wider network of personal relationships than was available at home and closer integration with society through marriage and assumption of roles of public responsibility. The traditional form of such journeys of self-discovery has been the quest. The hero's daily life is disrupted by a mysterious challenge or a

summons to a mission, he accepts the challenge, then follows the lonely journey into hostile territory, an encounter with a mysterious lady in a wayside castle, the single combat against overwhelming odds or a monstrous opponent. The quest is always to some extent symbolic, the various stages of the quest metaphorically marking the progress of the hero on the path to self-knowledge. The characters, especially the secondary ones, are usually two-dimensional, presented in black and white terms depending on whether they oppose or forward the ideal to which the quest is dedicated.

Buchan's romances, both the historical and modern ones, have been seen as latter-day tales of George and the Dragon (Kemp at al 1997: 48) and indeed, one of the ways to approach them would be to treat them as modern romances of knight errantry. This has been the premise adopted in the present thesis. To the knowledge of the author a thorough analysis of this kind has not been attempted before and neither have Buchan's protagonists ever been examined as modern knights on a quest.

Time may be right for this kind of analysis for various reasons. When the books were first written, the gentlemanly ethic was part of the daily life of the upper classes and understood and admired by the lower and the moral qualities here discussed were held to be self-evident for a certain kind of man. The chivalric revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had produced a culture which was infused with chivalric sentiment, it had pervaded all the arts and its overwhelming impact was to be felt long after the central tenets of that revival had been discredited by the inhumanities of the First World War. Today the situation is radically different. The aristocracy has been banished from power for nearly a century and the classes that supplanted them have defined their identity through opposition to the code of values held by their erstwhile rivals, while shedding sentimental tears over their demise. In the socialist view of things, which prevailed in Britain after the Second World War, this class was destined to extinction and their values likewise. Mockery took the place of reverence. The result is that motives and rules governing the conduct of literary characters of that pre-socialist epoch might today appear incomprehensible and even risible. Chivalrous conduct itself has become so rare that it has elicited in recent years a veritable flood of books, films and computer games on chivalric subjects, all riding the crest of the wave of nostalgia for more innocent times. Yet only a couple of decades ago chivalry was a neglected subject, as R. Barber notes in his preface to his ground-breaking book in the field, *The Knight and Chivalry*, which appeared in 1970. M. Girouard was also covering new ground in 1981 when he published the first comprehensive account of the nineteenth-century chivalric revival, *The Return to Camelot. Chivalry and the English Gentleman*.

The present thesis proposes to analyse the chivalric motives in the behaviour of Buchan's protagonists. It was deemed practicable to divide the characters examined into four subgroups – gentlemen born, gentlemen made and nature's

gentlemen respectively, i.e. gentlemen of the blood, middle-class gentlemen who earned the distinction only by adopting the code of gentlemen born and those fortunate lower-class men whom nature had graced with qualities esteemed by gentlemen proper. The division is borrowed from Kenelm Digby who first launched it in the nineteenth century for reasons discussed below and from whose books the terms passed into general currency. The virtuous heroes must have their evil counterparts whose behaviour will fall short of the ideal. The villains who deliberately violate the code of chivalry and the unfortunate failures who fail to live up to the ideal are to be found under the classification of 'villains and failures'. Also this division allows a compact treatment of characters that appear in a number of related books or even related series of books and undergo considerable development as they emerge. This was the original plan. However, as the thesis grew in size, for consideration of space only the part containing gentlemen born could be included in the thesis proper, other parts dealing with gentlemen made, nature's gentlemen and villains and failures being consigned to the larger 'Buchan Project' which hopefully one day will appear in book form. As they were completed conterminously with the part included in the thesis but were too sizeable to be included even as appendices, it was thought expedient to make some reference to them in the conclusion to put Buchan's gentlemen born in their proper context among other, equally worthy, gentlemen and to show Buchan's range of sympathy and reference. Also, limiting the thesis only to the study of aristocrats and upper middle class professionals would distort the big picture considerably and as if reinforce the charge of snobbery levelled at Buchan so unjustly, while the aim of the project was diametrically the opposite. The whole project aims at contributing to the better understanding of Buchan's work in the light of the prevailing social mentality of the time by placing his protagonists firmly in the historical context and thus facilitate a better appreciation of his heroes by showing that there is much more to many of them than clichéd stereotypes would allow.

The texts chosen for analysis from the very large corpus of Buchan's writing are selected on the basis of the following criteria. First of all, they are works of fiction as opposed to history or biography where the chivalric component is equally intriguing but they would merit a treatment of their own. A sizeable number of his short stories have also been included and the choice here fell on the ones where the chivalric motif was clearly present and preferably some character development in this line as well. Secondly, male characters were chosen for reasons of limited space, though Buchan's female characters are of equal interest in the light of the prescriptions of the nineteenth-century code of chivalry. They, too, would merit an analysis of their own. The protagonists of the romances under discussion were an obvious choice but also a number of secondary characters provided interesting material for discussion and here the choice was made between the more fully developed and the more schematic. Thus, for instance, the colourful and memorable but very episodic character of

Ringan from *Salute to Adventurers* was not chosen but the Indian chief Shalah was. Likewise, Blenkiron from the Hannay books, whose chief chivalric virtue, fortitude, is very obvious but whose character is hardly ever developed and his appearances brief, was not selected. Similarly, a number of nature's gentlemen fell by the wayside, colourful and memorable as they were, for lack of more substance as literary characters. The same applies to the gentlemen born from *The Gap in the Curtain*, who, with the exception of Leithen, are described at length, but only to make one single point, and thus remain resolutely one-dimensional.

The method of analysis can be described as a close reading of Buchan's books to identify chivalric elements both in their structure and character building. It will be borne in mind that, the gentlemanly code of chivalry being implicitly presumed by the author and the characters, it is nowhere clearly stated or pointed at for the modern reader. It consequently has to be inferred from the action and motives of the heroes and villains and for this purpose these are described at some length, not just referred to. An additional reason for such an approach is the fact that until very recent times a number of Buchan's books had been out of print for some decades and the Buchan oeuvre is no longer at the general reader's fingertips, as it once was. A good case in point here is his short stories which remained scattered in various collections and magazines until they were collected into three substantial volumes by A. Lowrie in 1996/1997.

One more clear distinction needs to be made. Although the Victorian and Edwardian code of chivalry discussed here formed an integral part of the idea of masculinity in the period discussed, this is not a study of the construction of Victorian or Edwardian gender per se in Buchan's romances. Rather, it aims to be a study of the idea of chivalry as it is manifest in these books, making use of pertinent material on gender when it sheds light on one or another interesting aspect as they come up but being not really concerned with gender issues as such.

As chivalry is a phenomenon that does not yield itself to brief and pithy definitions, having evolved over a thousand years and developed new aspects with every succeeding age, its elusive nature bemoaned by its theorists and scholars alike, it has been thought fit to describe it at some length by way of defining the terms. It was found early on that the mere definition of what the Victorian gentleman was supposed to be like would be insufficient, as he did not spring ready-made from nowhere but was the product of many revisions of the code of behaviour going ultimately back to the early Germanic war bands. Thus, the idea of chivalry will be presented here in all its fluidity, from the rough-and-ready code of honour of the medieval knight to the sophisticated ideas concerning the behaviour of modern gentlemen of honour. It was also thought expedient to have this kind of synopsis of the phenomenon, though admittedly a rather lengthy one, for reference at the start of the thesis, instead of the pertinent material being scattered throughout the paper in the order it came up.

THE VICTORIAN GENTLEMAN AND THE CHIVALRIC IDEAL

Origins of chivalry

The Victorian gentleman has a long pedigree. All societies have esteemed in their ruling classes martial prowess, generosity and wisdom. Though their own roots were firmly implanted in early feudal times, the classically-trained Victorian gentlemen loved to dwell on their affinity with their Greek and Roman counterparts. Like Plato's ideal guardians they, too, aspired to fulfilling their role as leaders of men in the field while young and as law-givers and magistrates in maturity. P. Mason has summed up the the Greek ideal beautifully in *The English Gentleman. The Rise and Fall of an Ideal*:

They must be swift and strong, brave and high-spirited, dangerous to their enemies but gentle to their friends. They must be trained in body and mind, taught not only to handle their weapons and control troops in the field but to admire what is beautiful and to display in everything they do a sense of harmony and proportion. This training in a sense of proportion will make them virtuous and ensure that they do not try to overturn the state and become a danger to it. (1982: 21)

This Athenian ideal also decreed that a man of good birth and education should be beautiful and good and keep a balance between the body and the mind. The republican Rome had added to this ideal a stern sense of duty and high-minded seriousness which rejected the trivial. A well-born Roman also despised personal power and after holding high office retired to his country estate. (Ibid.: 22)

For the true origins of the modern gentleman's code of honour, however, we must go back to the pre-Christian Teutonic warrior bands. Though ultimately the medieval knight could be seen to have inherited the status of the Roman landed magnate and the political power of the infantry soldier of the Praetorian guard, his ideals were forged in the three turbulent centuries between the end of the western Empire and the accession of Charlemagne. Differently from the Roman legionaries he fought on horseback and held land because he was a skilled fighter. (Barber 2000: 4)

Early medieval kings and great lords were essentially military leaders whose success and failure depended on their ability to attract and maintain an armed following. The warfare of the time facilitated the emergence of a certain type of warrior. The war fought pre-eminently for plunder or conquest favoured swiftness and mobility on the part of the attacker and a body of men strong enough "to launch an attack, intercept one, or evade an interception" and, when under attack themselves, have "sufficient protection and training to destroy an inferior force or hold off a superior one" (Whitton 1990: 122). The invention of

the stirrup in China at the end of the fifth century and its adoption in Europe at the end of the seventh tipped the balance in favour of cavalry over infantry in the field. Now that the rider could keep his balance on impact, the way was open to a new type of warrior – the knight. His advantages were as follows:

[P]rotective mail armour and shield, a horse bred to bear the weight of a man so equipped, a high saddle and stirrups which enabled the rider to put his horse's momentum behind his spearpoint, and the lengthy training which gave him the skill to control these elements and to act in concert with his fellows made the knight the dominant force in battle. Knights were never the most numerous element in any army – they were too expensive for that – but they did represent the element which could force a battle by its mobility and win it by its strength. (Ibid.: 122–123)

The composition of the retinues of knights assembled around a great man could vary enormously. They could be mercenaries looking for lucrative employment, men drawn to a particular campaign by the prospect of loot, landless nobles out for a chance to improve their condition or men under a contract of service. In all these groups pressure to reward service with land was strong, as possession of land provided the only security against disablement, sickness or old age and was the necessary precondition of marriage. (Ibid.: 121)

The fragmentation of the Frankish kingdom into a host of small principalities constantly at war with each other had led to the formation of private armies by great magnates and corresponding levis by towns. The return to central authority under Pepin and Charles Martel brought along the merger of the two and the practice of rewarding service with land, as the time of anarchy had demonstrated the fickleness of the loyalty bought by gold alone. Once the big landowners with their war bands had been integrated into the formal structure of government in Charlemagne's time, service ceased to be viewed as dishonourable also by smaller landowners. The advantages of holding land from a lord who offered protection in return for military service gradually came to outweigh the merits of retaining individual freedom. The collapse of central government during the inept rule of Charlemagne's descendants, Viking and Saracen attacks on the remnants of his empire in the ninth and Magyar raids in the tenth century accelerated the development of systems of vassalage and tenure. When these pressures ceased, the lords continued to consolidate their power further, though not without vehement opposition from the men they had 'enfeoffed'. During the High Middle Ages feudal service became well-nigh universal and lost any remaining taint of shame as kings held land from kings and the Pope in Rome, while claiming to be overlord of all temporal rulers, styled himself the 'servant of the servants of God'. (Barber 2000: 11–12, 22)

Strictly speaking, the mounted warrior up to the late eleventh century is no more than a proto-knight. Though possessing many features one would today call chivalrous, what they lacked was a self-conscious *esprit de corps*, a sense of belonging to an élite and privileged class with a distinct ethos. (Ibid.: 3–4)

The moment of the transformation of the mounted warrior into the knight proper is difficult to pinpoint due to the scarcity of historical records and literary works from the period. Contemporary terminology is of little help here and tends to confuse the issue. The Latin *miles*, the Roman name for a soldier, was in the tenth and eleventh century used variously to denote warrior, vassal and armed retainer, and used interchangeably with *caballarius*, meaning a mounted warrior. Yet the twelfth-century knight is not just the old soldier on horseback in a new guise. He is the carrier of a new set of values which combine martial accomplishments with pride in ancestry and a keen sense of social status. (Ibid.: 16)

The values sung in the twelfth-century chivalric romances are those of a newly-established, *arriviste* group, not of an old, well-established class. The knight's equipment was so expensive that only the well-to-do could afford it, so the new class of warriors came from wealthy but not necessarily titled families. It was inevitable that the newcomers would seek admission to the ranks of nobility. Military distinction has traditionally been taken as an indicator of honourable potential in men of modest birth and prowess in arms. Because of its honourable associations, it could be seen as conferring higher social status on an individual than his social origins might otherwise warrant. The old nobility's claim to special status had been through descent. For much of Western European history man's rank, his place in the natural hierarchy of things, and his nature, noble or otherwise, has been seen as having been determined by his 'birth', as the Latin word *natura* implies. Some individuals, or families, just inherited and passed on a greater stock of honour than others and this entitled them to special privileges and the leading position in society. (Powis 1984: 3, 14, 19–20)

The newcomers claimed virtue through their vocation. While nobility was conferred on an individual "through the childbirth pangs of a noblewoman" (Keen 1984: 146), initially knighthood was not. The knights were dubbed to knighthood, which marked their entry into a military fraternity with an emerging corporate identity. Originally the ceremony of dubbing a knight may have marked only equipping a man with martial arms. It was a custom of great antiquity, Tacitus in the first century observing in his *Germania* that among Germans a young man's achievement of maturity was marked by equipping him publicly with shield and spear, the equivalent of the Latin *toga*. (Ibid.: 66–67) In Carolingian times vassalage was marked by a grant of equipment, the 'complete arms', from a lord to his vassal as a 'heriot', to be returned on the vassal's death. The delivery of arms on the occasion of coming of age or joining a war band in 'pre-chivalric' times is not dissimilar to the twelfth- and thirteenth-century practice of conferring knighthood upon a young man's entry into a vassal group. (Barber 2000: 10) The relationship of the vassal to his lord was analogous to ties of kinship, as it had been earlier in the war band. Hence the great emphasis, both in life and literature, laid on the social standing of the

man from whom one received one's arms. The aura of his greatness would embrace also his followers: "das Wurde wardens wirdet mir" – "the worth of the worthy makes me worthy", in the words of a German ministerial poet of the twelfth century (Keen 1984: 69). The practice, common already with Lombard kings, of sending one's sons to the court of a great lord to be brought up in his household and to receive his arms from him, in such a manner sharing his honour and dignity, became universal in the Middle Ages. This idea of associative honour lies behind mass knightings which became widespread in the twelfth century and ushered in a new era for the mounted warrior. As the ties and obligations of vassalage became clarified and particularized, the mere act of homage and delivery of arms could be elaborated further and given a more universal meaning. The growing practice in the twelfth century of great men knighting, with great lavishness and ceremony, their sons upon coming of age together with other young noblemen in their foster care to provide their heirs with the nucleus of their own war bands points to knighthood acquiring a new significance. It is on its way to becoming a special estate. (Ibid.: 69–70)

In the early days a knight could make a knight of whomever he pleased, but from the beginning there had been the feeling that men of low birth and the unfree could not be knighted. The knights' special ire was roused by the pretensions of tradesmen and rich peasants to arms. To keep out such undesirables, royal and imperial ordinances were passed limiting access to knighthood only to the descendants of knights. This gave to what had merely been a profession a new pride in descent and a sense of belonging to a select club. As lineage took precedence over vocation in defining knighthood, the line between the old nobility of the blood and the new one of military virtue became blurred, *noblesse* and *chevalerie* becoming complementary terms. The traditionalists would try in vain to assert the supremacy of the aristocrats of the blood over mere cavalymen. The public opinion was overwhelmingly on the side of those who claimed nobility through individual virtue and achievement. "The law says that in the beginning nobility came only from good character and manly worth and courtesy," claims André le Chapelain in the 1180s (quoted in Keen 1984: 157). In the next three centuries all possible sources, both Christian and pagan, would be ransacked by heraldic writers intent on proving the possibility of ascent from humble beginnings to great heights by virtue alone. (Ibid.: 143–161)

The medieval chivalric ideal

'Chivalry' in its narrow sense denotes collectively all those warriors who had formally and ceremonially taken up knighthood. In its wider and more ambiguous sense it is used to describe "the obligations, estate and style of life of those entitled, on account of their birth, to aspire to knighthood, but who may or

may not be knights in fact”. (Keen 1984: 145) Keen whose definition this is, has remarked on the elusive nature of the term, which is rather “an evocative word, conjuring up images in the mind”, than a precise term. He has highlighted the difficulties any scholar would face when trying to pin it down:

One can define within reasonably close limits what is meant by the word knight, the French *chevalier*: it denotes a man of aristocratic standing and probably of noble ancestry, who is capable, if called upon, of equipping himself with a war horse and the arms of a heavy cavalryman, and who has been through certain rituals that make him what he is – who has been ‘dubbed’ to knighthood. But chivalry, the abstraction from *chevalier*, is not so easily pinned down. It is a word that was used in the middle ages with different meanings and shades of meaning by different writers and in different contexts. Sometimes, especially in earlier texts, it means no more than a body of heavy armed horsemen, a collective of *chevaliers*. Sometimes chivalry is spoken of as an order, as if knighthood could be compared to an order of religion: sometimes it is spoken of as an estate, a social class – the warrior class whose martial function, according to medieval writers, was to defend the *patria* and the Church. Sometimes it is used to encapsulate a code of values apposite to this order or estate. Chivalry cannot be divorced from the martial world of the mounted warrior: it cannot be divorced from aristocracy, because knights commonly were men of high lineage: and from the middle of the twelfth century on it very frequently carries ethical or religious overtones. But it remains a word elusive of definition, tonal rather than precise in its implications. (Ibid.: 1–2)

The composite portrait of the knight which emerges from the romances and popular treatises on chivalry is a set of virtues ostensibly largely secular, owing to their martial origin, yet, as we shall see below, they were defined in close conjunction with the Church.

The classic virtues of good knighthood are predictably qualities which were already highly esteemed in the Germanic war band – honour, prowess, courage, hardiness, truthfulness, loyalty, generosity and the free and frank bearing which bespoke of good birth and virtue. As the warrior rose on the social scale, nobility and courtesy, administrative ability and his role as the protector of the community became pronounced. His first duty was to defend the faith of Christ against unbelievers, which would win him honour in this world and the next, but a close second was his duty to protect his temporal lord and the territories entrusted to him, where he was to pursue all malefactors and defend the weak. He had to be wise and able to mete out justice, administer his estates well, so that he could support his rank and keep an open house befitting his station in life. He was expected to be in constant training, hunting wild beasts and seeking jousts and tournaments to test and improve his skills. He should be valorous and charitable and his motives for seeking knighthood should be pure. He must prize honour above all and take care his reputation was not tarnished by ‘reproach’. His greatest achievement was renown won among his peers for feats of arms and here a gradation evolved on the principle of ‘he who achieves more

is the more worthy'. One could start one's career by winning acclaim at jousts and tournaments, then go on to winning greater honour in war in one's own land and then as a crusader in distant and foreign parts. A *chevalier sans reproche*, a knight without blemish should eschew pride, false-swearing, idleness, lechery and treason. Treason was the darkest of crimes, the ultimate treason being slaying one's lord, but equally heinous was adultery with his wife or surrendering his castle. Cowardice in the field was another grave offence, gross cowardice, like treason, punishable by death and lesser instances involving loss of status and removal of insignia. Public disgrace was likewise the punishment for breach of faith, the failure to pay ransom when taken prisoner and freed to return home to raise it. Dishonourable conduct toward women involved marrying below one's estate, slandering women and raping them. Access to the company of honourable knights was barred to hardened excommunicates, violators of churches, murderers of malice prepense, arsonists, robbers and pirates. (Keen 1984: 2–15, 175–176, 210–211)

The knight striving for ever greater fame in his profession of arms could find an added spur to his ambition and solace in the harsh male world of constant competition in the favour to be found with ladies. With the advances in building techniques and improved standards of living, the members of the rough and ready war band had to rethink their attitude to women. A way had to be found to protect the few noblewomen now living amidst the ever-increasing armies of retainers in what amounted to barrack-room conditions in the new castles and baronial halls. As the prime functions of marriage were dynastic aggrandizement and the preservation of the purity of the lineage, sexual relations with the seigneur's wife, daughters or female wards were out of bounds for the socially inferior retainers. A means had to be devised to channel the sexual energies of the hot-headed young men growing up or serving in the household into socially acceptable behaviour which would not harm their own career prospects nor damage the marriageability of the ladies. (Duby, Barthelémy, de la Roncière 1988: 75–83)

The culture of courtly love, which came into being as a response to this need, removed the lady from within the reach of her social inferiors by putting her on a pedestal, yet allowed the men around her to focus their desire on her person in an asexual and rigidly controlled way. She could be worshipped from afar, respectfully and secretly, her favour could be sought discreetly yet publicly by becoming her champion in jousts and tournaments, she could be the object of agonized outpourings of the heart in poetry and song, yet her reputation would not be tarnished if all this was done according to established conventions. (Ibid.) The cult of the lady, the knight's service of the object of his secret desire in a spirit of feudal submission and near-religious fervour, took centuries to develop and owed its evolution to a number of powerful influences working together. Its sources are varied and still a matter of debate, so below only the main currents shaping it are indicated.

The term 'courtly love' itself is an unhistorical one, having been invented in the 19th century. Despite its sometimes problematized nature, it aptly describes the shift in cultural attitudes concerning human emotions and sexuality which found its expression in the chivalric romances of love, the chief vehicles of formulating and expounding the new ideal which came into being as a result of a revolution in sensibility in Europe in the twelfth century. Human emotion, no longer regarded as a disease of the will and an enemy of reason, started to be viewed as having the potential of inspiring nobility of behaviour. The Church, in the process of overhauling itself, seized upon this potential to encourage a more personal attitude to religion. Human love in its various forms – sexual, conjugal, maternal, filial – could be seen as a preliminary image of what it meant to love God. (Pearsall 2001: 177) Patterns of devotion were changing. Christ Pantokrator, the Ruler of the Universe of Byzantine art, staring forbiddingly down from church apses, was supplanted by the tortured Son of God in extremis on the Gothic crucifix, an object of loyalty and compassion. Similarly, the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin, a gracious lady and loving mother, could be worshipped in her own right (Morris 1995: 218).

It had not always been so. The early church fathers had seen woman as the serpent's ally and tool in man's fall from grace. The dogma which set chastity at a premium was highly suspicious of the female sexual allure and went to extremes trying to curtail it. The role of individual women working for the Church, on the other hand, was highly regarded and the tradition of noblewomen being actively engaged in patronage and charity, inspired by the Roman idea of the mistress of the house acting as a guardian of domestic deities, was soon established. Mariolatry first emerges in the sixth and seventh centuries, but as a cult it developed slowly, the Virgin remaining on a par with the other saints until the sea-change of the late eleventh and early twelfth century. The cult of Mary emerges and runs parallel with the chivalric idealization of women and eventually takes over many secular expressions of chivalric love. (Barber 2000: 73)

For the refinement of sexual passion into a cult of an idealized woman to take place the rough warrior of the primitive war band had to undergo a cultural transformation. This became possible when his new administrative duties took him to the king's or a great nobleman's court where he came into contact with a far superior culture than his own. The courts were run by well-educated clerics who around the year 1000, when the world did not come to an end as many had feared, had largely abandoned their contempt of the world to embrace the new ideal of carving out a career at the rapidly growing courts of great men. A system of education came into being for training these new administrators which laid a heavy stress on *elegantia morum*, the so necessary for the courtier sophistication of manners and morals. The 'courtly' virtues these men prized – "affability, friendliness, a benign countenance; moderation and measured conduct, gentleness, temperate moods and reticence about [one's]

accomplishments” – have ever since formed an integral part of courteous behaviour. (Ibid.: 68)

Courtly manners are the essential prerequisite for seeing love as an elevated form of service, the word ‘courtly’ (*curialis*) characteristically emerging around 1060–80, being coincidental with ‘chivalry’. The appearance of the chivalrous cult of the lady was greatly facilitated by a by-product of the eleventh-century monastic reform and revival – a new emphasis on education. Intellectual currents at work inside and outside the Church in Christendom brought into fresh focus the legacy of ancient Rome. The new enthusiasm first manifested itself in a spate of Rome-inspired law-making but soon the re-creation and transmission of the example of Rome permeated almost all spheres of thought and art. In monastic and episcopal schools the secular literature of imperial Rome was used to improve the students’ Latin skills. The works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal and others, read aloud at meal times or privately in the hours of recreation, “may have been consciously valued as models of rhetoric, the art of presenting old truths persuasively, but their very success in that art made their contents insidiously attractive” (Barron 1987: 12). The schools’ graduates, depending on their means and ability, went on to careers both in Church and State ranging from high officialdom at the court to the stewardship of some humble manor. Trained in the classics, but due to the nature of their employment in touch with the aspirations and realities of the medieval secular society, the clerks were ideally placed to formulate the new attitude to women which makes its appearance in the second half of the twelfth century and transforms the *chanson de geste*, the epic song of manly deeds, into the chivalric romance of love.

The new type of courtly narrative which emerges after 1150 fuses epic action and Ovidian sentiment. The *chansons*, reflecting the values of the war band, had ignored the relationship between the sexes. The occasional women who find mention in them remain shadowy figures in the background to the action, cast in the minor roles of mothers, sisters, brides or prizes of war. However, the classical epics which had inspired these songs of deeds had also celebrated noble women with a far wider range of roles available to them. Moreover, whether passive or active, these women “were passionately involved with the men who often wronged but could not ignore them”. (Ibid.: 19–20) When the clerks undertook to revitalize the epic in the changed emotional climate of the twelfth century, they looked for inspiration chiefly to the works of Ovid. Little known in the West before the twelfth-century renaissance of learning, Ovid spoke directly to men who after centuries of self-abnegation had found new pride and pleasure not in the hereafter but in the here and now. So great was his attraction and influence that the period has been called *aetas Ovidiana*, “the age of Ovid” (Grocock 1990: 57). Ovid became the favourite Latin poet of the Middle Ages. He was “the master poet of love and the greatest poet who had ever told of marvels – miraculous transformations and weird adventures mostly

motivated by sex” (Highet 1985: 59). In *Ars amatoria* (*Art of Love*) and *Remedia amoris* (*Remedies for Love*) he had dissected ironically the psychology and physiology of love and in the *Metamorphoses*, his encyclopaedic masterpiece, given the Europeans their most inspirational collection of fabulous tales with miraculous transformations at the end. Yet this slick cynic and imaginative storyteller was also a romantic and a moralist who alone among the major poets since Homer had written with such sympathetic interest about married love. (Martindale 1990: 6–8) The Ovidian lover, as he appears in *Ars amatoria* though, is a slave of passion who worships god Amor and his lady whose every whim he tries to gratify in order to win sexual favours. Ovid’s attitude to love is mock-reverent and wholly pragmatic and as such could not serve as the lone model for the highly serious cult of love of the troubadours.

The philosophy of courtly love, which perceives sexual love as intrinsically ennobling, while undoubtedly borrowing from Ovid, owes its idealism to Plato and his Neoplatonic followers. Plato’s doctrine of the two worlds, one eternal and intelligible where “ideas” or “forms” dwell, and the other the sense-world of time and change, and the soul, simultaneously cosmic and human, acting as an intermediary between them, was elaborated further in the third century by Plotinus, the founder and supreme exponent of Neoplatonism. At the heart of Plotinus’s teaching is contemplative desire, the soul’s progress through a hierarchy of spheres back to its original source – the One and the Good – from which all spheres originally emanate in descending order down to the world of sense. The hierarchy of reality has also two principles below their ineffable source. The divine mind, which is identical with Plato’s forms or ideas, is the level of purely intuitive thought, at once perfect intelligence and true reality. The second principle is the soul, which extends from the world of the intellect down to material bodies, and its principal characteristic is discursive reasoning. The soul is constantly striving, while the intellect is changeless and eternal. The soul can reach up into intellect, and fully illuminated, ascend to the One and the Good which, as its first principle, fills the whole universe and is accessible to all, depending on the capacity of the individuals to receive it. It is a philosophy of the constant striving of the soul to be reunited with its original source:

The sole object of the good and wise man, the supreme goal of human endeavour, is to return to the Good and be united to it in the union of love which is beyond and above the contemplation of intellect, by the power coming from the Good, the impulse of return which is constitutive of his very being. First he must detach himself from the worldly desires and concerns of his lower self, the composite being of body and soul, by rigorous intellectual and moral discipline, inspired always by love and helped on his way at first by contemplation of the beauty of the world of the senses – which, rightly contemplated, will lead him back to the intelligible beauty of which it is a reflection. As he becomes perfect in intelligence and virtue (for Plotinus the two kinds of perfection are inseparable), the philosopher will rediscover his true and eternal self, which is intellect, or rather soul perfectly conformed to intellect, and wake to its life.

Then he is ready to go on to the One when the One manifests itself and brings him to union. (Armstrong 1963: 217)

Neoplatonism came into Christian theology above all through the writings of St Augustine, the early Cappadocian theologians and the mystical theology of the pseudonymous “Dionysius the Areopagite”. It became diluted and diffused in traditional Christian theology and can be detected in early European metaphysics, moral philosophy, logic, science and art. (Ibid.) From the twelfth century onward its influence was reinforced by the Europeans’ contact with Islam.

The first mass encounter of Christians with the Muslim world occurred in the second half of the eleventh century with the crusaders’ advance in Spain, Sicily and the Holy Land. Both religions were aware of their common origin in the same Near Eastern monotheistic tradition and borrowed from each other extensively, though selectively. Having examined and tossed aside their common religious inheritance with the Muslims, Western Christianity held on to their shared intellectual one. The impact on the development of Christian philosophy of the Greek metaphysical and scientific thought, transmitted through the commentaries of the ninth-century philosophers of Baghdad and made accessible to Western scholars through translations from the Arabic in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, “is so great that it cannot be quantified” (Johns 1995: 188–189). The corpus of Greek Platonic and Neoplatonic texts thus made available revitalized Augustinianism in the twelfth century and inspired the great flowering of scholastic philosophy in the thirteenth. The Neoplatonic doctrine of love also entered European literature through contact with the mystical philosophy and poetry of Muslim Spain which sought to discover spiritual significance in passionate relationships. Treatises like the Andalusian religious philosopher Ibn Hazm’s *Tawq alhamamaw*, drawing upon eastern textbooks on love and Platonic philosophy, can be shown to have influenced the troubadours of southern France in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. (Salter 1963: 665)

Courtly love as a set of ideas, but not yet a doctrine, appears in the songs of the troubadours of eleventh-century Provence which was ideally placed to benefit from the cross-currents of ideas due to its location between east and west, north and south. The courts of Provence were small, yet wealthy, the sporadic warfare of the nobles was not too devastating, the atmosphere was relaxed and beneficial to cultivating personal relationships with women who enjoyed greater freedom and a higher legal and social standing than was customary in the harsher and more pragmatic north. High-born ladies of considerable personal power may have become bored with the monotonous eulogy of martial deeds and desired something which would also interest them. The troubadours took the courtly virtues of imperial Germany and infused them with personal immediacy. (Barber 2000: 76–79)

From early on courtly love was claimed by its proponents as the privilege of the knightly class, brushing aside as rivals the monks and clerics who had taught the knight his manners. The relationship between the lover and his lady in troubadour poetry is akin to feudal service from which it borrows its language, yet it is seen as transcending established conventions. The lover may pledge himself to his lady as her vassal, in the hope of a reward for his service, but he seeks his lady's love not for personal enrichment or dynastic considerations, as he would in marriage, but because he desires her as a person and hopes to be judged by her by his own achievements, not his rank or wealth. The lover's suit is long and arduous and he has to earn his favour by noble deeds. As this is not courtship leading to marriage, the lovers being either already married or socially incompatible, secrecy is vital. Nevertheless, despite his love remaining a close-guarded secret, the lover should love one lady only and not diminish his own worth by being promiscuous. Love has to be reciprocated and freely given and might sometimes be rewarded by physical joys. The ennobling element in such relationships would be the suspense and the unalleviated emotional turmoil which, intensified by restraint the lover imposes on himself, either to heighten his ecstasy or for fear of destroying his desire by its consummation, would refine his feelings so that he could aspire to the lofty heights where his lady dwelt. Though seemingly overwhelmed by his lady's charms, the chief concern of the troubadour poet is not extolling the woman he loves but the progress of the lover's moral self. Love is seen as enhancing virtue and helping to suppress vice, thus contributing to nobleness of conduct. A courteous knight in his courtship was expected to display the already familiar knightly virtues of largesse, humility, valour, noble and frank manners, loyalty, honour and truthfulness. Courtesy (*cortesia*) meant courtly behaviour but also the awareness on the part of the knight of what constitutes good measure (*mezura*). He was to avoid extremes of behaviour and display and aspire to the golden mean in all his undertakings. If he was accomplished enough in his pursuits and suit, winning the esteem of his lady and admiration for his correct behaviour from his peers, he was seen as capable of *pretz* or prowess. His accomplishments, whether rewarded by the lady or not, were seen as capable of inducing in the knight a special state of mind, *jovens*, meaning a combination of youthful joy, lightness of heart and generosity, which is a reward in itself. The lover's ultimate prize would be *joy d'amour*, which could range from physical satisfaction to an almost mystical ecstasy, but it chiefly signified the lover's moral improvement which he has attained through the spiritual love of his lady. In its purest form *joy d'amour* meant self-imposed restraint to postpone or forego consummation, both to prolong the enjoyment of anticipation and not diminish the worth of the loved one by harming her reputation. The almost indefinite suspense and sublimation of erotic desire, known as *fin' amors*, was too high an ideal for most men who aspired to improve themselves through love and they could fall victim to *amars* (faithless

love) and commit adultery. Their human weakness does not discredit the high ideal though. The troubadour love is not by nature adulterous, designed to wreck marriages. It saw itself as above social conventions, disregarding marital ties which had nothing whatsoever to do with love, and claimed as its ideal the truest union of two souls. (Ibid.: 81–95)

The emerging doctrine of courtly love soon spread to northern France, Italy, Germany, Spain and England. It was absorbed by the emerging genre of chivalric romance which combined the epic action of the chansons and the cult of the lady with the dark mysticism of the Celtic heritage of Britain. The service of the lady becomes an integral part of the adventures of the questing knight as he journeys from engagement to engagement. The huge popularity of the best of them, Lancelot, whom Chrétien de Troyes had originally called into being at the behest of Countess Marie of Champagne to provide a courtly lover for King Arthur's queen Guinevere, attests to the pertinence of the ideal to his admirers and indicates the wide possibilities of identification. (Pearsall 2001: 178) Lancelot, the dedicated lover of his queen and the most exemplary vassal of his king, embodies all the conflicting loyalties and emotional tribulations of a knight enamoured of a lady who reciprocates his love but who has to be worshipped from afar in order not to disrupt the bonds of vassalage which bind him to her and her husband, his liege lord. That the tensions in such relationships could all too often become insurmountable and lead to socially disruptive behaviour is recognized by the unhappy end of this most cherished of medieval love stories. Despite his best intentions, Lancelot's love will lead to civil war, the dispersal of the Round Table and his king's death. His penance will be madness and his punishment the denial of the attainment of the Holy Grail, the symbol of spiritual contentment. This last will bring us to the crusader component in the chivalric ideal.

Chivalry, as we have seen, came into being when the Teutonic warrior ethos came under the mellowing influence of Christianity. It remains to trace how this essentially secular ideal was appropriated and manipulated by the Church in order to turn the simple warrior, intent on earthly glory in the field, into a crusading soldier of Christ, who would see as his ultimate reward the mission to carry the Cross beyond the pale of Christendom.

The Church had taken a long time formulating its attitudes to war and the warrior's place in society. Christianity, which claimed to be a religion of peace, had first to deal with contradictions in its own doctrine. The tension between militancy and pacifism was present in the Judaeo-Christian tradition from the start. In the Bible, Jehova, the vengeful God of battles of the Old Testament contested with Christ, the Prince of Peace of the New Testament. The pacific tradition had been strong in the early Church when Christians had defined themselves in opposition to the oppressive machinery of the Roman state. With the accession of a Christian emperor to the Roman throne and the legalization of the creed by Constantine, the Church had to reconsider its position, for the

Empire's wars were now Christian wars fought on behalf of a mostly Christian population. It befell to St Augustine at the end of the imperial age to formulate the Christian theory of the just war. He argued that a war could be justified if a city or people had deliberately breached the peace. In that case the loving intention of correcting sin and bringing the sinners back to the fold could justify the use of force. Nevertheless, after the fall of the Empire in the West the pacific tradition remained predominant in the Western Church. (Keen 1984: 45)

In the Dark Ages the monastic ideal of the flight from the world, the service of God within the comparative safety of the cloistral walls, held a strong appeal when outside the barbarians were waging their wars of plunder and conquest. But as the barbarian pressure did not cease in time but seemed to grow and the Carolingian empire, the chief Christianizing agent of the Church in the west, had to fight pagan hordes on all its frontiers, "the balance of ecclesiastical thought began to tip in favour of militancy, until in the end the crusading indulgence turned the teaching of the penitentials upside down". (Ibid.: 46)

The idea of knighthood as a Christian vocation has been traced back to the realization of the churchmen of the Carolingian and Ottonian periods that to protect the Holy Church against pagan incursions they had to adopt a more active stance. The Church's response to the weakening of royal authority in the chaotic ninth century was to take the initiative in trying to regulate and limit martial activity. In the tenth century the liturgy for blessing banners and swords appears. The same century witnesses the beginnings in the West of the cults of military saints, especially St Michael the archangel, the leader of God's heavenly host. In the eleventh century he is joined by St George, the patron saint of soldiers and armourers. In its attempt to harness the violent energies of the emergent order of knighthood as its own strong right arm, the Church swept aside the penitentials' condemnation of slaughter in war and readopted and extended St Augustine's doctrine of just war. The military threat of Islam and the Vikings during the ninth and tenth centuries had prompted the Church to bless the killing of the heathen to preserve Christendom. When the external threat diminished, leaving unoccupied the growing and lawless warrior class, the reforming papacy sought to bring them more firmly under its control. The Peace and Truce of God movement, regulating and limiting warfare, also asserted the Church's right to launch just wars to meet its own ends. The view that war could be meritorious and benefit the soul of those who participated in it, first formulated by Cluniac monks, was quickly put into practice by Pope Gregory VII who appealed directly to knighthood to come to his help, as *militia Sancti Petri*, in his power struggle with Emperor Henry IV. (Ibid.: 47-49)

In the second half of the eleventh century the papacy extended the concept of just war to embrace peoples and territories outside Christendom. Above all, the Peace and Truce of God was to be taken to the Muslims in Spain, Sicily and North Africa, and later the Holy Land. Besides promising a martyr's crown to those who helped to carry the True Religion to the heathen, the papacy offered

the crusaders the additional bonus of the full remission of their temporal penalties due to sin. When Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade at Clermont in 1095, he went even further and promised the complete absolution of sins to those who accepted the Cross. Urban's exact words are not known but those present at Clermont and those who later fought in the Outremer in the next two centuries seem to have entertained no doubts that they had made a pact with God which would ensure them a place in Paradise. (Johns 1995: 171–172) The military expedition to the East was recast by the papacy as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and for those who took part there was no longer any need to hastily take holy orders when preparing for death as an additional precaution to ensure salvation. For the knighthood as an order the crusades provided a sense of mission and a sanctification to the calling of arms. As *militia Christi* the knights could be confident that in their pursuit of worldly glory they were also doing God's work. (Keen 1984: 45–50)

However, the Church was never able to achieve the kind of total control over knighthood it had desired. The military orders which it had called into being for operations in the Outremer and Spain, rigorously monastic in their ideals and completely subject to the higher ecclesiastical authority, were too far removed from the secular pleasures of the court and tourneying field and too embroiled in the papacy's political intrigues to have a wide appeal. Which is not to deny that their dedication to Christian duty and single-mindedness of purpose did not inspire the conduct of lesser men. Nevertheless, as the crusading movement waned in the late thirteenth century, the secular nature of chivalry reasserted itself powerfully through the proliferation, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of secular orders of chivalry and knightly confraternities. Their ostensible aim was always some charitable concern but their chief attraction for members lay in the opportunities they offered for pomp and pageantry. (Ibid.: 49–50, 190–194)

Chivalry was born a secular religion and remained so till the end. Nothing illustrates this better than the ambiguities to be found in the romances about the quest for the Holy Grail. Strongly infused by the crusading spirit, they nevertheless “reflect attitudes that are strikingly non-sacerdotal” (ibid.: 61). Tellingly, the Church authorities, always eager to chide knighthood for their thirst for vainglory and instil into their robust minds higher ideals, deliberately left the whole matter of the Grail “in the limbo of legend” (ibid.). The reasons for the churchmen's reluctance to commit themselves to an opinion are to be found in the pronounced secular nature of the Grail romances.

When Chrétien de Troyes first created the character of Perceval in *Perceval* or *Le Conte del Graal*, his first concern was to tell a moral tale of a knight's education, both worldly and spiritual. He wanted to demonstrate that mere prowess and worldly renown should not be ends in themselves, that the real goal for the knight should be the improvement of his moral self, attainable through charity, love and faith. From the very first Perceval has a religious aura

but Chrétien is more concerned with carving out a moral code of knightly ideals and his concept of the Grail is left deliberately obscure. Hartman von Aue, who picks up the story, is preoccupied with the outward trappings of chivalry and his chief interest lies in exploring the knight's place in society. The high nature of knighthood itself is the theme of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* which likewise traces the eponymous hero's courtly and spiritual progress and brings the story to its conclusion. In his hands chivalry becomes a religion in itself, a common man's way to salvation, with its own order, the knights of the Grail. In some later versions of the Grail story, notably *Queste del Saint Graal*, a concerted effort is made by more clerically-minded writers to infuse the story with a greater Christian significance by giving Perceval two new companions, Bors and Galahad, the three respectively standing for redemption through faith, good works and spiritual purity. In the glittering world of late medieval romance their role, however, grows marginalized as their austere idealism and especially Galahad's almost messianic spirituality fail to inspire readers preoccupied with worldly splendour and display. (Barber 2000: 110–126).

From the Church's point of view the matters were not helped by the nature of the Grail itself. The final form the Grail story took was not only deeply unsettling to the clergy but questioned their very right to apostolic succession. The mysterious cup which the Grail became in later romances, used by Christ at the Last Supper and containing the blood he had shed on the Cross, which could provide sustenance and from whence he himself would rise to administer the sacrament as the ultimate reward for the spiritually pure, combined two traditions, both unpalatable to the Church. The dish's origin lies in the Celtic legend of a horn or dish of plenty which acquired its Eucharistic overtones when combined with the doings of Joseph of Arimathea as related in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, a fourth-century fabrication which forms part of the New Testament apocrypha. Notably, Joseph is a soldier who not only buries Jesus but obtains the cup directly from him with a mission to guard it in his own family until the worthiest knight of his lineage will appear to whom the full mysteries of the vessel will be revealed. In the earlier version of the story this man is Perceval, in the later one the superhumanly chaste Galahad who, having tasted heavenly joys, instantly expires and the cup leaves the sinful world forever. The story, enacted wholly in a secular setting, not only passes completely over the claims of the Christian priesthood to true apostolic succession from Christ's disciples but also their self-appointed intermediary role between Heaven and Earth. Furthermore, the liturgy of the Grail is enacted not in a church or chapel but in the hall of a feudal castle and the ecclesiastical hierarchy is completely ignored, religious advice to questing knights being dispensed by solitary hermits who in their former lives have been knights themselves. The quest of the Grail, though deeply infused with Christian sentiment, is thus ultimately not about knighthood in the service of the Church but rather it presents chivalry as a religious service in itself, a quest for moral

and spiritual truth which could be rewarded by direct communion with God. (Keen 1984: 60–63)

Chivalry as the code and culture of the warrior class never discredited itself. Its detractors and admirers alike regularly advocated a return to the ancient purity of the ideal when things seemed to be going wrong but they never questioned the appropriateness of the ideal itself. What undermined its standing as a viable creed was not the decline of its principles but the context it found itself in after the middle of the fifteenth century. Political and social change, coupled with new technology and tactics in the field, combined to transform the manner wars were waged and the mounted warrior's place in them.

Knights into Gentlemen

The sixteenth century has been called chivalry's 'Indian summer'. Tourneying enthusiasm showed no sign of abating, neither did the vogue for romance of knight errantry. Nevertheless, there were signs of impending change. The most telling of these was the lack of new departures which could reinvigorate the creed and bring it up to date. Malory, writing in the second half of the fifteenth century, had still been able to update his accounts of tourney and duel in his *Le Morte Darthur* to give them a contemporary feel but a hundred and fifty years later this would have been impossible. What had changed were methods of warfare which had made redundant the cavalry lance and full body armour. (Keen 1984: 238, 248)

Artillery revolutionized warfare and diminished the standing of the knight in various, sometimes unforeseen, ways. Contrary to popular opinion, knights had no difficulty coming to terms with firearms and initially these were not perceived as a threat. Handling guns was just one more skill to master. But field artillery was very expensive and needed specially trained men to handle the increasingly complex and powerful new weapons. This led to a significant growth in the size of armies and their increasing professionalization. Waging war was becoming a much more expensive and large-scale affair. In these bigger armies the role and proportion of knights greatly diminished as the number of footmen increased. The knights could fight very successfully on foot, as the great English victories of the Hundred Years War testify, but the foot soldiers who swelled the late medieval armies were pikemen, archers and handgunmen. Their combined actions were capable of holding off and foiling even the most dashing cavalry charge, for long the most decisive factor in the field. The impact the mounted warrior could have in the field was also diminished by gunmen, as more and more the outcome of a battle or siege came to depend on the expert deployment of the guns. All this led to a change in the composition of armies not favourable to the knights. While at the height of their glory the ratio of mounted knights to footmen had been one to one, or one to

two at the most, in the fifteenth century the ratio changed to nine footmen to one mounted man-at-arms. (Ibid.: 239–242)

Not only did the size and internal proportions of armies change. Their social composition altered likewise. The new footmen were hired mercenaries who, as a rule, were not of noble blood. They were yeomen who made war their business and livelihood. In this they differed greatly from yeomen hosts hastily assembled in former times for a short-term campaign and then disbanded. The emergent nation states favoured standing armies and soldiering became a viable option not only for the warrior class but also for men further down the social scale. These men needed to be disciplined and taken care of and this role quite naturally fell to noblemen who were expert at handling men and supplies, having for centuries taken their own troops to battle. Infantry command thus came to be regarded as honourable and a wholly acceptable office for a nobleman. However, the job of a captain of infantry, despite its superficial resemblance to a knight commanding his retainers, is essentially different. It is a much more administrative job, involving the daily running of garrisons, wrestling with the matters of pay and supply and the position comes to the holder by commission rather than by natural right. The officer's insignia underlines the difference. Instead of a personal coat-of-arms identifying a scion of a noble lineage in the field, the officer's uniform identifies the wearer not through birth but through office and the unit to which he belongs. But though the officers abandoned the visual chivalrous insignia, which was no longer of any use in the field, they retained their chivalrous code of honour. As the rank and file under their command were not of noble blood, this code did not extend to them and became the hallmark of the officer and gentleman. (Ibid.: 240–243)

Medieval armies had been financed by taxes raised for a particular campaign and they had been disbanded and paid off when the campaign ended. Now that armies were bigger, more professional and were no longer disbanded between campaigns, taxation to maintain them became permanent. The cost of having a standing army was so exorbitant that it could be met only by princes who could fund it from the public purse. War became the prerogative of governments who, with more money at their disposal, could finally gain control of the martial forces in their territories and establish a monopoly of military force. This had profound consequences for the ethos of knight errantry. (Ibid.: 242–243)

Chivalry as an ideal strove to reconcile two contradictory principles, the loyal service on the one hand and individualistic endeavour on the other. This proved an explosive combination, the ideal being frequently tarnished by the harsh realities of life. The knight's independence and enterprise were encouraged by rulers so that they would assume part of the financial burden of war, but the down side was inadequate control over their activities. In an age of erratic and meagre taxation, it was convenient for rulers to pass on the cost of equipment and training to the warriors themselves. The knight had to present himself when summoned by his employer fully armed, with his martial skills

well polished in tournament and battle. He was expected to finance himself from his income from land, but as this steadily declined from the twelfth century onwards, pay was introduced as an added inducement of service. This could never adequately cover the escalating costs of body armour, horses, training and maintaining the appropriate standard of living. In the circumstances the spoils of war were seen as a legitimate and fair compensation for at least part of the expenses the knight had incurred when preparing for the campaign. But there is a small step from loot as compensation to seeking booty for its own sake. War as an occupation offered, especially to minor nobility and landless men, a prospect of secure pay, unlimited looting, quick social advancement and the glamour of feats of arms. Men who lived by their sword only were for the rulers especially profitable to employ as their obligations to them ceased when they were paid off. But paying off great companies of mercenaries at the end of a campaign is not the same as disbanding them. They were left at large, to fend for themselves, still fully armed with equipment which was their own, and beyond control. The result was indiscriminate pillaging and banditry which was the very antithesis to what chivalry professed to be about. This problem was never adequately addressed during the Middle Ages, both the critics and idealizers of knight errantry resorting to admonitions and holding up the mythical purity of chivalry's Golden Age. Only when it was no longer profitable and practicable for the rulers to delegate the burden of financing their wars to the warrior class did knight errantry become outmoded and was abandoned in practice. Its spirit did not die. The strong streak of individualism which gave knight errantry its emotive force left a deep imprint on the European mind. It manifests itself in the independence of spirit, the cult of individual endeavour and a willingness to test oneself in hostile environments, a combination which has bred its share of champions of lost causes, explorers and empire builders who have ventured in pursuit of loot and glory farther than anybody thought of carrying the flag. (Ibid.: 228–237, 250)

Neither did the chivalric concept of nobility lose its force. As the courts grew rich through better tax management and war no longer provided opportunities of advancement quite as good as managerial posts in the government, a compromise was reached between the royal power and the nobility. The nobility needed additional income and the crown was ready to provide it through lucrative jobs in the administration in return for acquiescence to central authority. At the centre of this compromise was the understanding that the court would undertake to support the nobility as the dominant social class by rechanneling a substantial proportion of the proceeds of taxation to their pockets. In the early modern period the nobility supplanted the clerics in the rapidly expanding bureaucracy of the court, which had become the lodestar of social advancement, in full confidence that their prerogatives would be preserved. To ensure their cooperation, the courts even went so far as to make nobility's standards their own, pandering to their martial ambitions by spending

lavishly on chivalrous ceremonies and spectacle. While jousting ultimately faded in the sixteenth century, as it no longer related to the realities of the battle field, secular orders of chivalry continued to flourish because they retained their purpose of lending lustre to the personal service of a particular sovereign and encouraged the nobility to feel the same sort of pride in serving the state that their forebears had felt in serving their liege lord. So attractive did this service and the attendant panoply prove that the emerging middle class, whose origin was professional, not military, felt the strong pull of the values of the old nobility and embraced them as their own. (Ibid.: 248–253)

Chivalry was an international phenomenon and the English knights had operated in a wide international context provided by the Plantagenet dynasty's endeavours to seize control of France. With the cessation of the French wars in the fifteenth century and the failed attempts of the Tudors to rekindle them, England turned inward and the peculiar turn the reformation of its church took isolated it even further from continental affairs. Henceforth the discussion will be restricted to England, with the understanding that what is said applies also to a certain extent to Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as these were controlled by the same nobility of Anglo-Norman origin that ruled England.

The old nobility was never a very numerous class and the crown had taken good care to curtail its growth and influence. The rule of primogeniture had served its purpose well, ensuring the smooth passage of property from father to the eldest son without undue complications. The younger sons had had to look elsewhere for sustenance and employment. Their efforts to carve out an existence worthy of their noble blood led in the later Middle Ages to the recognition in England of two social degrees below the knight, both of them noble – the esquire and the gentleman. These were lesser landowners of heterogeneous background who would later be collectively referred to as the gentry.

The 'esquire' as a grade below the knight had become established by the second half of the fourteenth century. Squires had originally been trainee knights or knight's servants who had mastered all necessary skills and were waiting for an opportunity to be promoted to knighthood. They earned their bread by working as household servants in aristocratic households or served as mounted cavalrymen in seigneurial armies. Their backgrounds varied, from landed to urban or even peasant, but their training and association with great men made them undoubtedly genteel. By the time they emerged as a distinct group in their own right they had become landowners. Their rise was due to the great reduction in the number of knights in England in the thirteenth century which made knighthood more elitist. As the knights moved up the social scale, their place of lesser landowners was taken by the squires. (Keen 2002: 71–74)

'Gentleman' as a title of degree and its origins are more difficult to pin down. Its use at first was hesitant and confused but by the time of the Tudors it was a recognized category of gentility, being the lowest after lords, knights and

esquires. It seems to have emerged as a title for those men who claimed gentility but were landless and supported themselves with rewards of service. While the three other categories had military associations, 'gentleman' had not. This can be taken as an indication that after the abandonment of the French wars society was becoming progressively demilitarized and avenues of advancement could be found elsewhere than the field. (Ibid.: 97–102)

The title of 'gentleman' implied that its holder could claim gentility through not being forced to depend for livelihood on manual or menial labour and that he was accepted into the company of genteel and noble men. Due to the lack of property qualifications, the meaning of the title was imprecise and a gentleman's status depended on his being recognized as such. Recognition was based, for want of better criteria, on 'common repute' which seems to have involved five interrelated qualifications. The foremost among these was gentle blood which was supposed to manifest itself in a gentleman's bearing and character and could be recognized by other gentle people. In order to make that recognition possible, those who aspired to be recognized as gentlemen had to keep genteel company and maintain a style of living appropriate to their station. Thus the second qualification would be income not earned by labouring with one's hands. Ideally this income would be derived from lands freely held, with rights of manorial lordship associated with their tenure. Thirdly, if this kind of income was not forthcoming, one could aspire to the distinction of gentleman by holding office. There were a number of positions in aristocratic households and town administration which were seen as conferring gentility. The trouble with office-holding was that office only conferred temporary gentility which lapsed when the office was given up. Nevertheless, this avenue of advancement was of first importance for the emergence of regional gentry whose sense of identity and role in society it helped to confirm. The fourth qualification would be kinship or habitual association with other gentlemen or persons of noble blood. This was seen as providing the aspirant with credentials that his blood was indeed noble and recognized as such. The last recourse to advancement and recognition was honourable service. This was often the only resort of unendowed or underendowed younger sons who lacked other means of maintaining their status. Acceptable as honourable was service in the army in a rank superior to yeoman archer, service in an aristocratic household, administrative service of a lord, both spiritual and temporal, and of the king. (Ibid.: 103–114)

Genteel service had always been highly prized and not only in military capacity. What made it honourable was the recognition that the servant had skills to offer, be they martial, managerial, judicial or in any other useful field, that made him worthy of his master's hire. Association with power and his own expertise combined to give the servant power in his own right. This in time lent an aura of gentility to professions of non-military origin and opened up new prospects of social advancement for the professional classes. (Ibid.: 116, 120)

In the early modern period Crown servants, lawyers, doctors, academics, and after the Reformation, the married clergy, swelled the ranks of armigerous gentlemen. The sixteenth century especially witnessed a significant growth in the number of families claiming gentle status, which can be related to the expansion of the royal administration and the dissolution of the monasteries. The latter opened up the land market and enabled office holders to bolster their claim to gentility by the purchase of land. Nor was access to armigerous status denied to urban elites. Younger sons of landed families had frequently been apprenticed to merchants, so mercantile wealth could be quite acceptable, provided the claimant had held office and owned land. (Heal and Holmes 1994: 7–11)

By the sixteenth century also a three-layered division among the gentry had become apparent. Depending on their economic position and the kind of offices they held, the lesser landowners below the peerage could be classed as upper, middling and lesser gentlemen. The first group was comprised of knights who formed the county elite. They had economic interests wider afield than the local community and they dominated the magistracy and high office. The esquires were the middling sort whose duty it was to administer justice for the Crown. The ‘mere’ gentlemen were less likely to hold public office and their economic interests were confined to one manor or parish. Contemporaries recognized the importance of blood and descent but insisted that it was the service of the commonwealth that was the proper calling of the gentry. Many had adopted the humanist view that the service of the state was the only justification for claims of status and that virtue, honed by appropriate education, was a necessary element of gentility. (Ibid.: 15, 31)

Ever since the fifteenth century gentlemen had been sending their sons to grammar schools and professional teachers had been engaged by aristocratic, episcopal and abbatial households. Lay literacy had been growing since the fourteenth century and had significantly extended the range of services laymen could offer. More versatile service opportunities, in their turn, promoted a demand for the kind of training, or education, which would equip a literate layman for offices where they could compete with the clerics. It became fashionable for young men to attend university for a short period, even if they did not intend to become priests, and many went on to the Inns of Court in London which were emerging as centres of the kind of higher education which ambitious young men might need if they planned to hold office, run their own estates or help to run the estates and affairs of their social superiors. (Keen 2002: 122–123)

The rise of capitalism and the spirit of economic competition it fostered loosened the whole social hierarchy. The new ethos of enterprise gradually undermined the medieval ideal of ‘the contempt of the world’ and replaced it with the praise of life of action. The rise of merchant capital strengthened the monarchy which readily allied itself to its interests. The long dynastic struggle

among the Plantagenets had seriously weakened, and in many cases completely annihilated, old aristocratic families and rendered their loyalty to the Crown suspect. The Tudors, with their shaky claim to power, were willing to buy the loyalty of the new men on the make. Their new aristocracy was recruited partly from the ranks of old families but also merchants, lawyers and even yeomen were allowed to rise to high posts in government, their adherence bought with the spoils of the plundered monasteries. These upstarts needed social polish and governing skills which would also give them an edge over the ignorant nobles of the old school. Sir Thomas Elyot voiced the conviction of forward-looking men when he argued in his *Booke named the Governour* for a class of landed 'magistrates' who would not only be willing and wealthy enough to serve the Crown but would also be qualified to do so by their liberal education. The perfect instrument for their training was to be found in the new type of classical scholarship which had been gaining ground all over Europe since the 1490s. (Salingar 1986: 15–22)

The humanist movement, which was at the heart of Renaissance civilization, had sprung out of the classical *studia humanitatis*. Classical authors had been studied in the Middle Ages with the aim of bettering one's rhetoric skills but their use as models for imitation had been marginalised by the medieval predilection for scholastic argument. The humanists put the study of classical texts into the centre of their new curriculum which concentrated on grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry and moral philosophy. Humanism was a product of the rich Italian urban culture which sought new ways to express wealth and power and found it in the patronage of art and letters. As humanists depended for a living on the patronage of great men, they migrated to their courts and endowed their patrons, by means of their scholarly skills, with the glamour of an ancient civilization now deemed worthy of recapture and recreation. In England the clerical basis for administration in government had in the fifteenth century begun to crumble, their offices being taken over by educated laymen. The first humanists were employed by the Crown in the reign of Edward IV but it was the Tudors who first made proper use of the potential of such men. Not only did they owe their whole careers to their sovereign and thus worked harder to prove their loyalty, their employment was becoming inevitable due to the exceptionally high standard of Latin now demanded of international correspondence, especially of that with the Papal Curia where humanist style ruled supreme. All Tudors after Henry VII were humanist educated which ensured a favourable climate for the humanist educational reform in England. (Strong 2000: 130–133)

This reform established a system of instruction which was to be viable until the beginning of the twentieth century and saw as its aim training in virtue and good letters which would prepare a man for public service. The products of the new grammar schools were ideally expected to be well-versed in Latin and Greek, to have read the scriptures, the classics and modern humanist works, to

be good with their pens both in poetry and prose, express themselves well when called upon to speak and possess the kind of manners and social accomplishments urged on them by popular handbooks of gentlemanly behaviour. (Ibid.: 134–137)

The realization that the centralized courts of the emerging nation states considerably enhanced the role of the courtier in running the state had given rise to a body of humanist-inspired literature on how best to deploy this increased influence in the interests of the state. Handbooks appeared for all layers of non-labouring classes, all setting off from Plato's premise that a better society could be built through wiser rule, which ideally would take the form of monarchy presided over by a philosopher king willing to take counsel from his equally philosophically-minded courtiers. Advice to princes on how to rule their states ranged from the unworldly high-mindedness expounded by Erasmus in his *Institutio Christiani Principis* ('The Education of a Christian Prince') to the ruthless pragmatism of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* ('The Prince'). Courtiers and governors were urged by men like Elyot in his *Booke named the Govenour* to make use of their humanist education when carving out a career in court. Later in the period books of etiquette appeared, catering for the basic needs of the new arrivals to the ranks of nobility. The most influential and widely imitated of such handbooks for noblemen was Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* ('The Book of the Courtier') which had inspired Elyot in the 1530s and appeared in full English translation by Thomas Hoby in 1561. (Briggs 1983: 122–124) Translated into all European languages, for two centuries it became "the basic grammar of court society" (Revel et al 1989: 190). The immense popularity it attained and its profound influence

testifies to Castiglione's skill in identifying and codifying precisely the qualities needed by the administrative classes of the courts of Europe: qualities quite different from those defined by the chivalric codes of the medieval feudal nobility. Along with the more practical and prescriptive courtesy books that followed it, *The Courtier* transmitted to Europe a behavioural ideal that would become an integral part of Western culture, surviving in a modified guise in the French seventeenth-century ideal of the *honnête homme* and, most influentially perhaps, in the English notion of the 'gentleman'. (Cox 1994a: xxiii)

The Courtier is composed of four books taking the form of four dialogues between the chief courtiers of the tiny dukedom of Urbino in 1507 who in a playful mood one evening undertake to "shape in woordes a good Courtyer, specifying all suche condicions and particuler qualities as of necessitie must be in hym that deserueth this name" (Castiglione 1994: 35). The most influential would have been Book I which attempts to define the attributes and accomplishments of an ideal courtier, the result being "a seductive distillation of the medieval ideal of the perfect knight and the humanistic model of the cultivated man" (Cox 1994a: xvii).

Castiglione's ideal courtier is first and foremost a soldier, a knight *sans reproche*, who displays all the virtues of the fighting man. Not only has he mastered all the arts of war, knows all the techniques and weapons necessary for fighting on horseback and on foot, and constantly hones his skills for war and tournaments. To keep in good bodily condition he fills his spare time with strenuous manly sports like hunting, swimming, leaping, running, casting stones and playing tennis. A man of invincible courage and undoubted spirit, always ready to defend his honour and never baulking at a fight, he is not a rash hothead but a competent man who knows how to handle a conflict or battle when they become inevitable. He spurns all womanly affectations of manner and speech, never brags, is always modest and discreet about his achievements, esteeming most highly the judgement of his peers.

What sets Castiglione's courtier apart from the exemplary medieval knight is the new emphasis on grace. All the military skills and sports mentioned above serve not only a practical purpose but also an aesthetic one. They contribute to the grace and nimbleness of the body which it is a pleasure to behold, for Castiglione's courtier is no rough man of war but a cultivated aristocrat who knows the art of pleasing. He is very aware of the impression he makes and will always take good care to project an amiable and graceful aspect of himself in whatever he does. As his whole life passes under the scrutiny of his peers and superiors on whom his rise and fall depend, the art of presenting one's person to the greatest advantage becomes the most desired accomplishment. To this end, his whole existence should be subjected to constant self-improvement which starts in childhood and never ends. A vital asset which would give the courtier a head start in competition with other men is his good birth. Noble birth not only endows his person with natural grace and comeliness which with training could be brought to perfection, but instantly elevates him above equally gifted untitled men, because nobility automatically commands respect and creates a favourable disposition towards him in all the people he meets. Good breeding is essential as it enhances inborn grace and shapes the kind of character and behaviour which would be pleasing at first sight. The first favourable impression can then be reinforced through social accomplishments and a cultivated mind. Not only ought the courtier to be learned in authors ancient and modern, know Latin and Greek, be able to compose poetry and prose in his native tongue, be fluent in conversation, sing, play various musical instruments, dance nimbly, paint and draw, but he should display in all these activities a certain abandon which Castiglione calls *sprezzatura*, to which the closest English equivalent would be nonchalance and which in Toby's first translation was called recklessness.

Sprezzatura proved the most seductive and controversial of Castiglione's ideas, hard to pin down and nearly impossible to achieve but recognized by practitioners and Castiglione himself as being of overriding importance without which all other accomplishments would be of little value. *Sprezzatura* is central in achieving the kind of natural grace which should accompany the courtier's

every move and endeavour. Grace in man is a gift of nature but this does not mean that the less endowed should not be able to achieve this quality through study and diligent practice. Grace as such cannot be learnt but a courtier who wants to improve himself can learn to approximate it by observing men who have it and imitating them. The key to success is to exhibit a certain nonchalance in whatever one does to create an impression of effortless. *Sprezzatura* comes from the verb *sprezzare* ('to disdain') which aptly conveys aristocratic contempt for effort or hard work. The notion ultimately derives from Cicero's *De oratore* where *negligentia diligens* ('diligent negligence') is esteemed as one of the virtues of Attic oratory. (Castiglione 1994: 380) As Cicero's term implies, in *sprezzatura* the effort is not lacking but it is masked by seeming carelessness. The idea proceeds from a well-known premise that effort and strain are little appreciated, but seeming effortless always is. Thus, in order to impress, effort must be diligently covered or the whole effect is spoilt. If masterfully done, the result would be spontaneous and seemingly effortless ease in things which in reality are achieved through hard practice. The art of disguising art is tricky, as too diligent an effort at concealment will give the game away and bring accusations of dissimulation. It is therefore vital to achieve a proper balance between effort and effortless, which is more complicated than it seems, for *sprezzatura* also implies the kind of abandon which overcomes a person who is so engrossed in what he is doing that he forgets that he is doing it for show and gives himself entirely up to the activity in hand. Such forgetfulness of the self is closest to inborn grace and thus the supreme goal of the courtier.

The Courtier's influence on Elizabethan and Jacobean culture was profound and manifold. It permeates all court activities and the literature of the age, despite the growing post-Reformation Italophobia. The book went briefly out of fashion in Puritan England but was back in favour with the Neoclassicists of the eighteenth century, Dr Johnson proclaiming it "the best book ever written on good breeding" (Cox 1994b: 413). Romanticism's cult of sincerity dented its reputation somewhat but Victorian gentlemen found its tenets still topical and modern disciplines that deal with the psychology and art of self-presentation have found in Castiglione an early spokesman for their own most cherished ideas.

The Elizabethan neo-medievalism was firmly supplanted by classicism in the reign of Charles I, the English upper classes discovering a new ideal in the culture of ancient Rome under the aegis of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, whose large collection of Roman antiquities and his personal example as a collector set a new standard for gentlemen. Henceforth, until the end of the nineteenth century, when the introduction of death duties made collecting questionable, a cultured English gentleman mindful of the Italian concept of *virtù* popularised by Arundel was also to be a collector and a connoisseur of art. After 1688 the Whig ascendancy identified itself ever more with Rome in their

pursuit to rival and surpass the Roman achievement in their own empire. The Palladian villa in its landscaped grounds was a statement proclaiming the owner's intellectual and spiritual affinity with ancient Rome and the superiority of English liberalism over continental rivals. The classicized landscape and the new amiability of its owner who supervised the workings of his personal arcadia from the lofty heights of refined feeling inspired by Rousseau were a deliberate attempt to leave behind the class conflicts of the seventeenth century. This idyllic pastoral was shattered by the French Revolution which brought back age-old fears and destroyed the belief in man's innate benevolence. Part of the shock for the upper classes was the realization that it had been the relaxation of social conventions that had brought about the collapse of the *ancien regime*. If Britain was to avoid revolution, a new kind of relationship was to be articulated between the classes which would bring back social deference in a way that would not antagonize the lower classes. The solution was to be found in reclaiming the lost national heritage.

The Victorian Chivalric Revival

Ironically, the eighteenth-century glorification of reason and antiquity helped to revive interest in the Middle Ages, the period against which the Age of Reason had most violently reacted as superstitious and ignorant. The antiquarian movement, which had come into being in the wake of the destruction of monastic libraries, gathered momentum in the eighteenth century. The new scientific approach to history favoured the study of documents, artefacts and the surviving buildings in order to arrive at a coherent understanding of the preceding periods. The mid-century reaction to the sterility of classicism led to a major re-evaluation of medieval styles. Edmund Burke's and others' treatises on the nature of the sublime rehabilitated Gothic architecture. The concept of the picturesque, formulated at the close of the century, decreed that buildings, like landscapes, should be enlivened by movement and variety. The new demand for asymmetry and irregularity brought into fashion a plethora of flamboyant and exotic styles, among them the vernacular Gothic. As the ruling classes sought to come to terms with the threat from France and the new canons of taste, Britain witnessed a spate of enthusiastic castle building. (Girouard 1978: 219–220, Girouard 1981: 20–21, Strong 2000: 501)

The reasons were psychological and practical. The castle with its forbidding outer aspect brought to mind authority and permanence, while the mock baronial hall inside, surrounded by spacious and comfortable living quarters, suggested ancient hospitality and modern house parties most agreeable combined. Some builders were fired by antiquarian enthusiasm or a desire to break free from the classical canons of taste. Some owners, especially in the North of England and Scotland, where the medieval past was not so distant and

until recently castles had served as places of refuge during raids and rebellions, had existing castles to restore and embellish. In an age when hierarchies were crumbling and the new money was vigorously demanding recognition, castles could underscore the owner's ancient lineage or create an impression of there being one where there was none. Almost all were driven by the romantic impulse and nostalgia for less complicated times when the lower classes had known their place and modern industry had not yet desecrated the countryside. Also, the military aspect of castles appealed to a nation at war, enthusiasm for their building culminating during the years of struggle with Napoleon, though castles continued to be built throughout the ensuing century. (Girouard 1978: 242, Girouard 1981: 43, Lewis 2002: 28)

Enthusiasm for castle-building inevitably led to renewed interest in chivalry. Here the way was paved by comprehensive scholarly surveys and catalogues, handsomely bound and richly illustrated, not only of vernacular architectural styles but of the whole rich panoply of medieval life, which made the past tangible and real. Medieval armour and weapons, banished to the attic in the seventeenth century to make room for classical sculpture, at the beginning of the nineteenth century resumed their rightful place in neo-baronial halls. The fashion of collecting armour and using heraldic devices for interior decoration rapidly gathered momentum, aided by two collections operating on a commercial basis in London and the private ones open to the public. The most influential of the latter was the magnificent scholarly collection owned by Samuel Rush Meyrick whose three-volume study of the subject, *A Critical Inquiry into Ancient Armour as it existed in Europe but particularly in England from the Norman Conquest to the reign of Charles II* in 1824 established a new standard of expertise in the field. The book was dedicated to George IV who had Gothicized Windsor Castle and thus put a seal of approval on the medieval revival. In the 1820s Meyrick supervised the installation of a new gallery in the Tower of London to display its long-neglected collection of armour and built a whole new castle to better display his own. By mid-century halls full of armour or specially built armouries had become the nineteenth-century equivalents of the sculpture galleries of the Georgian age. (Girouard 1981: 50–53, Mancoff 1995: 24)

Likewise, the literature of the Middle Ages was dusted off and made available to the general public by enthusiastic scholars who were fired with admiration for the ideals chivalry had stood for. As early as 1754 Thomas Wharton, in his *Observations on the Faerie Queen*, had suggested that aesthetically medieval poetry was not inferior to that of the ancients. In 1762 Richard Hurd in *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* found the heroic vision of the chivalric romances superior to that of the Greek epics. He also, through explanation and example, provided his readers with an image of the knight as a romantic hero whose high sense of honour inspires him to gallant and magnificent deeds. Hurd's praise for the days of pure and uncorrupted chivalry

inspired Thomas Percy to publish in 1765 his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* which made available to the general public a wide range of ballads, sonnets, historical songs and metrical romances. In the 1770s Susan Dobson published her translations of the French author J. B. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye's ground-breaking books on chivalry and the literature of the troubadours which combined a wealth of information about the age of chivalry with the author's unreserved enthusiasm for the subject. In 1801 Sainte-Palaye's life of Froissart appeared in Thomas Johnes's translation, who in the next eight years put into English the chronicles of Froissart, Joinville, de la Brocquière and de Monstrelet. The same decade saw the appearance, in Robert Southey's translation, of the three great Spanish romances *Amadis of Gaul*, *Palmerin of England* and *Chronicles of the Cid* and two representative anthologies of vernacular romance – George Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* in three volumes and Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, which had been out of print since 1634, went through two hasty republications in 1816 to be edited and lavishly published in 1817 by Southey, now poet laureate. In the 1820s histories of chivalry and the crusades were accompanied by further editions of chivalric literature and modern works of poetry and prose dealing with chivalric themes. (Girouard 1981: 21–22, 42–43; Mancoff 1995: 24, 27, 30–31)

The towering presence behind this burst of interest in the Middle Ages was that of Sir Walter Scott. An antiquarian and a romantic, he had combined in his poetry and prose his vast learning and creative genius in a way which brought distant ages to vivid life. With passionate conviction he created his version of the past which his readers found irresistible and inspirational. Having virtually invented the romance of Scotland's history and put the country on the map for European readers, he proceeded to set his stamp on the Middle Ages. His Merry England of happy Yuletide feasts in baronial halls, tilts and tournaments, dashing knights and fair ladies spawned countless imitators in literature, inspired artists to recreate this escapist world in painting and book illustration and provided a blue-print for castle enthusiasts of how life was to be lived in their neo-medieval halls. Beside their memorable settings, the appeal of Scott's recreations of the past, not always medieval, lay in a type of character whom he forged by combining the most admired aspects of medieval chivalry and the best features of the gentlemanly code of honour of his own day. Though he wrote of chivalry as a thing of the past, his heroes, notably the much-loved Ivanhoe, suggested desirable standards of behaviour for gentlemen of all ages. Scott can be said to have brought chivalry up to date and popularized a new type of hero, dashing, honourable, high-minded, brave in the field, loyal to friends and superiors, fair to enemies and gentle to women and inferiors, who can be called truly chivalrous. (Girouard 1981: 33–37; Montgomery-Massiberd and Sykes 2001: 187)

The next generation, raised in the heady atmosphere of the medieval revival, was impatient to leave the confines of mere fancy and carry the practice of chivalry over into real life. Here the way was led by Kenelm Henry Digby who set himself the task of showing his contemporaries how chivalry could be adopted as a modern code of conduct. For Digby, chivalry was not a narrow medieval phenomenon but a permanently valid code of noble living which had taken different forms in different centuries. He extended the concept of chivalry to embrace classical times, a view already suggested by Richard Hurd, and chose to use 'knight' and 'gentleman' as virtually interchangeable terms. Chivalry-mad, Digby saw himself as a modern knight errant, his passion inflamed by walking tours in England and on the continent, exploring and recording in his sketch-book castles old and new. One especially impressive ruin on the Rhine, Ehrenbreitstein, furnished him with the title of his book *The Broadstone of Honour*, with the subtitle 'Rules for the Gentlemen of England'. It came out anonymously in 1822 but was soon expanded to four volumes, to be published under his own name and with a new subtitle 'The True Sense and Practice of Chivalry' in 1828–1829 and 1844–1848 and was further enlarged to five volumes in 1877. (Girouard 1981: 56–60)

Deeply conservative, suspicious of republicanism and democracy, a Catholic convert who traced the cause of the decline of chivalry and the troubles of the modern age to the destructive effects of the Reformation, Digby wrote his book to uphold age-old Christian values which he saw as being threatened by modern 'sophists', the worst of whom were the Utilitarians. The Utilitarians, intent on abolishing social evil, were preaching an intellectual pragmatism which left no room for emotions in their search for the felicific calculus. One of the first to attack the narrowness of their vision, then on the ascendant and about to engender major social reforms, Digby wrote their doctrine off as refined selfishness and claimed the pre-eminence of the wisdom of the heart over that of the head. A chivalrous man, possessed of a simple faith and high honour, would instinctively follow the right path of action regardless of self-interest. For Digby chivalry was a state of mind which disposed men to generous and heroic actions and opened their hearts to intellectual and moral beauties. Any man who aspired to this state could become chivalrous if he developed the right sort of character. High on Digby's list of chivalric virtues, beside the traditional ones of honesty, courtesy, loyalty, generosity, modesty and gentleness, were physical prowess and contempt of luxury. He noted with approval the lack of comfort in medieval households and advocated a rigorous training scheme for the body as a means of strengthening the character. Probably in reaction to the extolling of the intellect above all other faculties by the Utilitarians, Digby claimed that in the long run character was more important than intellect, suggesting to many responsive minds that exercise and violent physical activity were to be preferred to cultivating the mind. Eagerly embraced by educationists and clergymen, the idea was to transform the whole educational system of the country and elevate

games played at school and university to cult status, thus reforming the prestige of sport. (Ibid.: 61–64)

Similarly, his contempt for money and money-making was to have a lasting impact. A man with a comfortable income of his own, Digby despised the middle classes for their entrepreneurial spirit and declared the self-made prosperous man the supreme enemy of the chivalrous gentleman, calling him a “churl” and “the savage envious hater of all superiority, either of virtue or of rank” (Digby 1823: 13–14). This view struck a responsive chord in many an aristocratic heart and was considerably to hinder the rise of the moneyed middle classes to social pre-eminence. While, in Digby’s view, it was virtually impossible for prosperous middle class men to turn themselves into modern knights, there were no such barriers for the lower classes, provided they knew their place. He popularized the fond belief of the upper classes that there existed a certain natural affinity between the aristocrat and the working man, provided the latter did not aim to rise socially. This belief was to prove extraordinarily tenacious, the aristocrats clinging to the idea that the working classes preferred to be led by them rather than just men with money, until proven wrong by the ascent of the Labour Party. A natural corollary to this idea was the concept of the ‘natural gentleman’, a simple working man who accepts the existing order and knows his own place in it. These are usually figures from the pastoral, pre-industrial age, like shepherds or peasants who have a natural dignity unsullied by greed. Another acceptable type was the promising young man of humble birth whose great abilities and natural grace earn him the recognition of gentlemen of birth and they recognize him as one of their own. As money-making was to be frowned upon under any circumstances, the career opportunities for Digby’s true gentlemen were extremely limited. The traditional aristocratic options of Parliament, the Law and the Church were all suspect, politics forcing the chivalrous man to work side by side with men of trade, lawyers laying too much stress on cleverness and the clergymen could be motivated by the wrong reasons. That left the army, soldiering offering the best opportunities for practising chivalry in the modern world. (Ibid.: 64–66)

Digby’s book caused a furore of excitement among the young and old. In the 1820s and 1830s the Middle Ages were all the rage, providing an escapist yet socially challenging alternative to the present ills. To idealistic young Tories, like the Young England group, who hated Utilitarianism and laissez-faire and were appalled by the downside of industrial progress, the paternalistic Middle Ages offered an example of a more harmonious and just society where the upper classes had enjoyed a more personal and warmer relationship with the lower classes and had not yet abandoned their social obligations to the poor and defenceless. Socially conscious artists, like Augustus W. N. Pugin in his famous *Contrasts*, held the Middle Ages up as an idealized mirror to reveal the horrors of the modern industrial society. The less socially conscious immersed themselves in the playful aspects of chivalry, donning armour for fancy dress

balls and going to the theatre to enjoy lavishly staged pageants in period costume based on historical events or contemporary best-sellers like Scott's *Ivanhoe*. The initial stage of the revival, when chivalry was still closely bound up with the Middle Ages, culminated with the attempt of a young Tory earl, Lord Eglinton, to stage a real-life tournament on his estate in Ayrshire in 1839. What began as a private tilting party for friends rapidly snowballed into a national event of huge proportions and cost. The great day when it came was ruined by a violent rainstorm, the brave pageantry of modern knighthood getting ignominiously stuck in the mud. To the detractors of the modern cult of chivalry this seemed an apt metaphor and the whole idea of modern knighthood seemed suddenly discredited. However, less than a year later all was to change. Queen Victoria married her beloved Prince Albert and for the rest of her reign chivalry was to become part of the ideology of the state. (Girouard 1981: 77–92; Yates 1995: 64–65)

Prince Albert, who was to completely mould the tastes and character of the Queen, had been raised in the spirit of German Romanticism. A child of a broken home, of a profligate father and runaway mother, he took chivalry very seriously. Having assiduously turned himself into a model of male virtue, he set about reforming the discredited House of Hanover, making every effort to purge the Royal Family of the taint of sexual promiscuity and gross self-indulgence. His impoverished background and moral purity did not endear him to the British aristocracy, but his insistence on the sanctity of the domestic hearth, his high sense of duty and willingness to give his utmost for the common good were in complete accord with the new morality preached by middle-class evangelicals. (Girouard 1981: 112; Williamson 1986: 186–187; Hibbert 2001: 99–101)

Evangelicalism, a reform movement within the Anglican Church, had come into being in the late eighteenth century as a response to the wide popular appeal of Wesleyan Methodism and the relentless and accelerating pace of change. The instability of a society in turmoil and the lukewarm response to this on the part of the State Church had given rise to a call for a new kind of piety which would revitalize English life. Recognizing the enormity of the task of fighting corruption on the level of the society as a whole, the evangelicals concentrated on the home as a place of refuge from the corrupt world where the true Christian virtues could be upheld. The moral regeneration of the society was to begin at the level of the individual who embraced the new spiritual life in Christ. This entailed the renunciation of the self and rejection of the world full of pride and sin in favour of obedience and submission to the will of God. Individual spiritual rebirth could best be accomplished in the congenial environment of the Christian household. Here acts of individual piety on the part of the believer could be aided and reinforced by family prayer and constant vigilance and help on the part of other members of the household. As life for the Evangelical Christian was a ceaseless struggle with moral degeneracy and

temptations of the world, it involved a close scrutiny of every act and thought to detect a possible fall from grace. Private introspection, aided by diaries and journals, still needed external support in the form of family discussion, members of the household acting as checks and guides to each other in their struggle to fight evil, taking comfort together in the assurance of salvation through Christ. In the threatening world of ever more brutal economic competition and erosion of faith, the Evangelical home was to provide a safe haven of peace and tranquillity, a last place of refuge for traditional values and benevolent paternalism which in the world outside was being undermined by the amorality of the free market economy. (Hall 1990: 50–55)

Evangelical views on the role of the family and the home were defined in response to a new division of labour between the sexes and the separation of the home and the workplace. In the early nineteenth century businesses had still been small enough to be operated from the home. The lawyer lived above his office, the shopkeeper above his shop and the mill owner next to his mill. Only the very wealthy members of the upper middle classes could afford a separate residence. In the small family business the wife worked alongside the husband, the couple operating as an informal partnership. The man carried the legal responsibilities for the family concern but there was no sharp demarcation between the male and female spheres of activity in the day-to-day running of the business. The growth of industry and commerce and the formalization of business transactions gradually disadvantaged the woman in the partnership due to her inferior legal status and lack of training opportunities. As men extended their businesses and entered into partnership with each other, women were increasingly confined to their homes, now no longer above business premises but increasingly in the new suburbs. Designated as strictly residential areas where any business activity was forbidden, the middle class suburbs took their bearings from the manorial estates of the gentry. Roomy villas in spacious gardens signalled the genteel aspirations of the entrepreneurial class and provided the backdrop for their new domestic philosophy. By having been able to remove his womenfolk from the bustle and competition of the workplace, the middle class man had proved his economic prowess and confirmed his ability to be the sole provider of his family. Henceforth his role in life would be defined through his business and professional activities. His wife, living a life of enforced leisure as proof of the family's rise in status, would have to make do with the activities available in the domestic sphere. The doctrine of separate spheres for men and women, first preached by the Evangelicals, had by the time of the Queen's marriage become the new middle-class orthodoxy. It treated the different roles assigned to the sexes as biologically determined and God-ordained. Man's responsibilities and cares were seen as belonging to the public sphere where he was to seek success, while to aspire to do the same for a woman was considered unnatural and immoral. Her duties were limited by the home and consisted in being a good wife and mother. Men had power in the

world but women had influence over men and were to use it subtly and discreetly to provide moral guidance and support. Woman's particular responsibility was to create a truly Christian home where the work-harassed man could find moral and spiritual sustenance. For the public sphere was seen by the Evangelicals as corrupting and sinful where true Christian values were being undermined by the insidious spirit of worldliness. (Ibid.: 58–74)

'Worldliness' was the gravest charge levelled against the modern society by the prophets of 'earnestness' who emerged in the 1830s and through their powerful invective shaped the moral climate of the whole Victorian period. The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century had come into being as a passionate reaction to what was perceived as lack of true zeal in the Anglican Church. The spirit of scientific enquiry and the resultant clockwork image of the Newtonian universe had robbed the Church of its moral earnestness. The evangelical Methodists had replace the rational Anglican deity with the suffering God of the Gospels in an effort to counteract the erosion of true belief under the encroaching influence of the worldly spirit. Originally a lower class movement, evangelicalism became respectable at the end of the eighteenth century when it started to make converts in the upper classes. The movement split into two at the turn of the century, the Evangelical Movement remaining in the Church of England, while the evangelicals of the Methodist and Nonconformist Churches preferred to operate outside the State Church. Despite the split, the Anglican Evangelicals and the New Dissent fought jointly in the first half of the nineteenth century as the army of Christ combating 'nominal' Christianity which they perceived as the root cause of all evil in society. (Gilmour 1996: 72–73, Houghton 1985: 228–229)

'Nominal' Christianity, as a symptom of how diseased the society had become under the untrammelled influence of worldliness, was decried by thinkers who perceived England as going through a profound crisis and were alarmed by their fellow countrymen's complaisant refusal to acknowledge its magnitude. Not only had nothing been done to alleviate the appalling side effects of the industrial and agricultural revolutions. Rationalism and libertarianism, economic liberalism and working-class radicalism, Catholic Emancipation and blatant atheism were shaking the very foundations of society and yet people went about their everyday business seemingly oblivious of the impending disaster. Adherents of such divergent creeds as the Evangelicals, the Utilitarians, the crypto-Catholics of the Oxford Movement, the Carlyleans of the radical *Fraser's Magazine*, the disciples of Thomas Arnold at Rugby and the romantic Apostles of Cambridge to whom Tennyson belonged, joined forces in condemning an attitude to life they derisively referred to as Old Leisure. Best exemplified by the Regency dandy devoted to his round of sensual pleasure, Old Leisure designated a casual, easy-going attitude to life and religion, a refusal to take an interest in intellectual matters, an unwillingness to trouble oneself with big moral issues and witty scepticism which was paraded as

toleration but was in reality a barely masked lack of earnestness. The central evil in such a life, from which all corruption and immorality flowed, was the wrong attitude to religion. 'Nominal' Christianity, formal adherence to the dogma but indifference to the creed, the unthinking repetition of old truths which one no longer believed, was seen as worse than even an honest refusal to believe. This state of living in 'practical' or 'virtual' atheism without acknowledging it was condemned by the apostles of earnestness as 'insincerity' and its prevalence in the modern world was ascribed to the spirit of worldliness which had been silently taking over the society and was obliterating the spirit of godliness. Lukewarm religion which had forgotten the fear of God had blunted man's sense of truth and bred the heartless egotism of capitalism. (Houghton 1985: 219–240)

The return to true religion and 'sincerity' was to be accomplished through moral and intellectual earnestness. To be earnest intellectually was to embark on a personal quest for the meaning of life. Fundamental ideas were to be rigorously re-examined in order to arrive at a clear understanding of God's purpose and regain true belief. Thus armed with Truth one could counter the temptations of the world and provide a vision to visionless men who had not as yet awakened to their true condition. To be earnest morally meant treating life as a pilgrimage, a constant struggle to overcome the forces of evil, both in society and in one's own soul. This required complete moral dedication and a passionate hatred of sin. In life's battles the soldier of Christ fought above all for complete control over his own desires, as the slightest distraction of the mind from God could mean a breach in his defences and ruin his chances of salvation. (Ibid.: 220–241)

Life conceived of as a struggle needs its heroes. In a society where all moorings are cut loose, a hero could provide an example of how to cope with the changed circumstances and through positive action provide an antidote for enervating self-doubt. When the intellect is diseased and the conscience tender, an escape into anti-intellectualism can bring welcome relief from constant soul-searching. Unsurprisingly, the prime prophet of Victorian earnestness, Thomas Carlyle, and those who followed in his footsteps, professed a heartfelt contempt for the meek and the saintly, extolling Force as the animating principle of the universe and proclaiming the worship of the strong and the able as a solution to the moral dilemmas of the age. For Carlyle, society was founded on hero-worship, all hierarchies governing human relations being really *hero*-archies and human history a catalogue of the deeds of great men. (Carlyle 1961a: 170–175) Carlyle's hero, closely modelled on the supermen of Romantic literature and given the additional moral authority of the Elect of his native Calvinism, would be a modern messiah who would show the way in a benighted world. Carlyle had found his own messiah in Goethe whose two injunctions – find you hero and follow him and know your work and do it – became the central tenets of his own Gospel of Work which he preached in his seminal works *On Heroes*,

the Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843). (Houghton 1985: 306–311)

Carlyle's Gospel of Work, which found many adherents, was born out of the Protestant work ethic and the needs of the entrepreneurial class. While the aristocrats could afford a life of leisure, the middle classes had to work hard. Without a strenuous effort success in business was unthinkable and the concomitant rise in status an impossible dream. In an age of commercial and industrial expansion not to take your work seriously was to lag fatally behind in the rush for new markets. Furthermore, Calvinism condemned idleness as a moral sin, leisure being the first step in the downward path to hell, for the Devil would find employment of a different kind for idle hands. Work was thus a safeguard against temptation and a Christian's mission in God's eternal warfare with Satan. The trouble with modern times, as the prophets of earnestness clearly saw, was the wrong spirit in which work was done. Instead of perceiving the fulfilment of his many tasks as a Christian duty, a service rendered to God in one's secular calling, the middle-class entrepreneur dreamed of making his pile and retiring to a life of leisure akin to that of the idle aristocrats. (Ibid.: 6, 189, 243–245)

The solution was to condemn idleness and extol the dignity of work, Carlyle going even so far as to concede that, despicable as Mammonism is, it is preferable to idleness, as there is at least *some* earnestness in making money, while

Idleness is worst, Idleness alone is without hope: work earnestly at anything, you will by degrees learn to work at almost all things. There is endless hope in work, were it even work at making money. (Carlyle 1961b: 219)

Work was to be turned from an unavoidable necessity into a supreme virtue in its own right. Carlyle's contribution to the Victorian chivalric revival was to transform work into a chivalrous activity, which he hoped would convert early capitalist self-seekers into the new nobility of labour, "[f]or there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness in Work" (ibid.: 229). In his Gospel of Work labour acquires a religious character, being conceived of as a palliative to ease the effects of the loss of faith and provide an alternative to fruitless speculation leading to inaction. Carlyle had found Goethe's dictum '*Know thy work and do it*' therapeutical in his own struggle with doubt and preached it as an antidote to "Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself", all the "helldogs /.../ beleaguering the soul" (ibid.: 230). All true work is religious by nature and to work is to worship, to go through a purifying fire which banishes doubt and awakens the soul to a new life which finally has a meaning:

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it and will follow it. /.../ Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens

him to all nobleness – to all knowledge, ‘self-knowledge’ and much else, as soon as Work fitly begins. /.../ ‘Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone.’ (Ibid.: 230–231)

To work is to join the celestial brotherhood of fighters, a pantheon of heroes who have fought honourably in the battlefields of life. In a wider context Carlyle’s worker could think of himself as joining a vast army of warriors, a vanguard in mankind’s crusade to subdue the forces of nature. As in this struggle capital and labour would have to fight on the same side, differences between employers and employees should be overcome through the moral reform of the entrepreneurial class. As the early Victorians did not view antagonism between the classes in economic terms but through the prismatic glass of paternalism, Carlyle directs his exhortations at what he calls *Millocracy*, the capitalists and mill-owners, whose moral transformation he hopes to achieve by appealing to their better nature. Opposing the new Chivalry of Work to the old Chivalry of Slaughter, he calls upon the Captains of Industry to examine their consciences and assume the mantle of leadership in society, the old aristocracy having forfeited the right to rule through inactivity. Entreating the middle classes to put aside their buccaneering attitude and assume responsibility for their workers like the barons of old, Carlyle urged them to earn the loyalty and love of their employees and become the true Industrial Aristocracy, noble warriors in the one true war in the world worth fighting – working for the common good of mankind. For every individual has a mission in life, a work he can do and for which God has furnished him with certain faculties so that he could pursue his calling and thus do his duty by himself and by God. Duty in the wider sense of useful and unselfish work for the benefit of others is presented as the ideal at the conclusion of *Sartor Resartus*. ‘*Do the Duty which lies nearest thee*’, he intones, following his Goethe, for tackling the task at hand would liberate the mind from endless introspection and set free man’s vital energies for the pursuit of higher goals than mere search for personal happiness. (Carlyle 1961c: 133)

One worker who was tempted to live a life of aesthetic pleasure but chose the arduous path of public duty was Alfred, Lord Tennyson who not only took upon himself the task of writing a new national epic to answer the needs of his country in times of moral crisis but also created a hero who would sum up in his person all the ideals and strivings of his age. By rewriting Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* to suit modern times, Tennyson provided a blueprint of chivalrous behaviour for his own and two subsequent generations.

In the 1850s when Tennyson produced his first four *Idylls of the King*, Arthurian stories were very popular but only as a light diversion in the context of romantic medievalism, nobody as yet having tapped their potential as a collection of moralizing stories of use to the modern age. Tennyson’s early Arthurian poems had similarly been romantic exercises but when in 1842 he had attempted to update Arthur in his *Morte d’Arthur* as “a modern

gentleman/Of stateliest port” (ll. 345–346) who could serve as a new role model for middle class businessmen, he met with little success, though he had taken the extra precaution of framing it as a Christmas story and tentatively called it *The Epic*. Neither the genre nor the hero elicited an enthusiastic response and Tennyson abandoned his plans for a bigger epic, only to return to the subject when Arthur’s return had received the sanction from the royal couple. In 1841 Prince Albert had become the Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Fine Arts called into being to advise and direct the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. Prince Albert saw it as an opportunity to enhance the diminished prestige of the monarchy by choosing subjects which would underline the sanctity of kingship. The Lords Chamber, the Royal Gallery and the Queen’s Robing Room were conceived of as a setting for the annual government ritual of pledging fidelity to their sovereign by the Peers and Commons when she came to open the session of Parliament. The corridors through which she would pass and the Lords Chamber where she made her speech presented little problems, for the glorious scenes of British history and exemplary governmental service furnished ample material for decorators to work with. The Queen’s Robing Room, on the other hand, merited special attention, as this was the room where, by donning her ceremonial robes, the Queen transformed herself from wife and mother to a living symbol of royal majesty. At Albert’s suggestion, who saw in the stories of Arthur a parallel with the *Nibelungenlied* and probably had in mind a similar potential for them as the German epic had in fostering the feeling of national greatness, Arthurian legends were to be used for the Robing Room decoration. Chivalry was to be the dominant theme but neither the Prince nor William Dyce, the artist who had originally made the suggestion to the Prince and later got the commission to paint the frescoes, seem to have initially quite realized the insurmountable difficulties the legends would present when put to use to glorify the Queen as an exemplary wife and mother and a sovereign whose power was on the ascendant, not in decline. The life of a legendary medieval king whose wife loved another and whose Brotherhood of the Round Table disintegrated through treachery and adultery was an awkward choice for the most important ceremonial room not only in the kingdom but in the whole empire and the amatory exploits of the knights provided little material for extolling marital bliss. Dyce’s solution to his difficulties with his subject, once he realized their magnitude, was to ignore the risky and thus the most interesting and central episodes of the cycle and concentrate on illustrating moral qualities which certain peripheral episodes in the cycle could be found to provide. When Tennyson decided to return to the idea of a modern epic based on the Arthurian material he took his lead from Dyce and planned his epic as a series of cautionary tales illustrating the most salient moral issues of his day. Tennyson’s Arthur was to be summoned from Avalon not to preside over a merry court of adventure and romance but as a staunch example of middle class virtue, living a life any middle class Victorian male could relate to, that of

breadwinner, public servant, husband and father, in circumstances calling forth the same hard decisions they had daily to make and subjected to the same pressures of anxiety and doubt. By portraying his Arthur as an extraordinary man in ordinary circumstances and endowing him with the Carlylean qualities of heroic leadership, Tennyson created a paradigmatic Victorian gentleman. (Girouard 1981: 116–123, 178–181; Mancoff 1995: 40–47, 52–53; Poulson 1999: 22–44)

To fit the legend to modern times, Tennyson had to considerably alter the content and emphasis of the Arthurian cycle as it was presented to the late-medieval readers of Malory. If Arthur was to emerge as a paragon of Victorian manly virtue, not in fact unlike the Prince Consort to whom the *Idylls* were consecrated in 1861 on the occasion of his death, in terms that left little doubt that he had been Arthur reincarnate, he had to shed the undesirable associations with adultery and incest which had made the medieval king's tragedy all the more poignant. The flawed hero of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* had committed incest with his half-sister and the fruit of that union, Mordred, had been the chief instrument of the destruction of his kingdom. The adulterous relationship of Queen Guinevere and Lancelot, Arthur's most accomplished knight, had fitted perfectly into the medieval framework of courtly love and the divided loyalties and fatal passion of the lovers had elicited sympathy rather than revulsion from the readers who lived in a culture which kept love and marriage firmly apart. The Victorians, in their endeavour to elevate the home to a sacred place and the woman presiding over it to angelic status, found the amatory escapades of Arthur's court unacceptable. If Arthur was to be hailed as a national hero, his own life, and especially his relationship with his wife and court, were to be subjected to a stern revision.

The Arthur of medieval romance had been called into being as a model of good kingship, a ruler who brought law and order to the lands he conquered and whose fame rested above all on his military prowess. Tennyson's Arthur also makes a realm and rules but the guidance he offers his knights is above all moral, not military. He is presented to the reader as a model of mature manly behaviour, an earnest Carlylean hero who knows his duty and by doing it unquestioningly and unflinchingly sets an elevated moral example for others to follow. "Ideal manhood closed in real man" (l. 38), as he is defined by the author in the epilogue to the *Idylls* which dedicates the whole epic to the Queen, his life is governed by his conscience and he puts private pleasure aside for public good. The king whose role in Malory was to provide an illustrious court to which the knights could return and where they could relate their colourful exploits, in Tennyson's treatment moves centre stage to lead his knights in a crusade against the spirit of worldliness. In this war of Sense against Soul he is the blameless Christ-like figure standing for the Soul, his taint of incest removed and the blame for the break-up of his kingdom being laid squarely on Guinevere's shoulders, whose sin with Lancelot embodies the corruption of

untrammelled Sense. Having violated the sanctity of the home by refusing to accept the limitations of her domestic sphere, Guinevere has to take the full brunt of the blame for Arthur's failure in his public sphere. In the medieval tradition it was not Guinevere's betrayal of the king which had devastated Arthur's kingdom but the way her betrayal had been used by Mordred to avenge his illegitimacy. Tennyson makes Guinevere the central cause of Arthur's ruin and by defining his virtue against her sin he not only delineates the desirable moral standards of the Victorian gentleman but also attempts, by grappling with the challenge offered by the corrosive modern doctrines concerning love and marriage, to define the concept of modern courtly love.

The evangelical ideal of the submissive domesticated wife had by the mid-century been challenged by the demands of the "new women" for equal rights with men in the legal and social sphere and the doctrine of free love which condemned the bourgeois marriage and elevated sexual love above social obligation. If these developments could be blamed on insidious foreign, especially French, influence, then the implications of the extent of sexual corruption at home, brought into the open by a series of books and articles in the 1850s, were no longer to be ignored. Not only had the side effects of the Industrial Revolution brought hordes of prostitutes onto the streets but the anonymity of the growing industrial cities was also fostering the practice of adultery and seduction on an unprecedented scale. Unbridled sexuality was in the opinion of many Victorians undermining the very health of the nation, with grave consequences for its future and empire. Tennyson's *Idylls* tackle the problem of the proper relations between the sexes against this background of mounting panic about the moral state of the nation. They were also influenced by, and helped to formulate, the emerging cult of woman worship, which sought successfully from the 1860s onwards, by separating lust and love, to reinstate the ideals of moral purity. (Houghton 1985: 348–369)

Arthur's finest moment in the *Idylls* for many Victorian readers was his final meeting with Guinevere, a scene which has no counterpart in the earlier tradition. The idyll "Guinevere" (1859) is set in an abbey to which the Queen has fled in shame after her affair has been exposed by the King's nephew whom Tennyson calls Modred. The King, who had nobly refused to believe any slander spoken against his wife, has been forced to react by declaring war on Lancelot. Having made peace with his best knight who had refused to take his life in battle, Arthur comes to say his farewell to Guinevere before heading west for his final battle with the usurper Modred which he knows to be his doom. He hurls his bitter accusations at Guinevere prostrate at his feet and then magnanimously forgives her, only to abandon her to her grief. Telling her that she had spoilt the purpose of his life, he reminds her of the high ideals his rule had been based on before her sin with Lancelot had corrupted his court:

*But I was first of all the kings who drew
 The knighthood errant of this realm and all
 The realms together under me, their Head,
 In that fair order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of men,
 To serve as model for the mighty world,
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
 And all this throve until I wedded thee! (Ll. 373–396)*

Evangelical domesticity, the Romantic cult of feeling and the resurrected literature of courtly love had combined in the 1840s and 50s to produce such an exalted view of love. Authors like Charles Kingsley and Coventry Patmore had pioneered the idea that in the war of sense with soul the adverse effects of lust on man's soul could be combated with the spirituality of true love. While carnality was bound to drag man down to hell, love elevated to a new level by reverence and devotion could give man a foretaste of the joys of heaven. A good woman, by nature chaste and pure, could help man in his struggle with his baser nature by setting a moral example. Woman worship, by defining womanhood through morality rather than passion, most agreeably resolved for the Victorians the conflict between body and soul. By removing women from the real world and putting them on a pedestal to be worshipped from afar as creatures more angelic than human, the taint of shame could be removed from sexual passion which could now be calmly and joyously considered in terms of chivalric service. Passionate yet chaste attachment to the loved one before and after marriage was seen as the best remedy to fight prostitution and counter the attraction of extramarital affairs. Love purified and spiritualized to transcend the senses could also be tapped as a powerful ethical force to inspire men to deeds of valour and to chastise women into complete submission to their husbands. A woman worthy of devotion would excel at self-sacrifice. Putting aside any desires of her own, she would devote her life to ministering to the needs and

desires of her husband, her sole reward being having been chosen by him to be the guardian angel of his domestic hearth. (Houghton 1985: 350–355, 373–381) Six years after *Guinevere* had appeared in print John Ruskin would write in his influential essay on woman's true place and power, "Of Queens' Gardens":

She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good, instinctively, infallibly wise – wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable because infinitely applicable, modesty of service – the true changefulness of woman. (Ruskin 1896: 109–110)

Tennyson's *Guinevere* is an earthly woman who has refused to place her needs and desires above those of her husband. Having yielded to the temptation of the flesh, she has placed desire above duty and in her vanity and self-importance she has failed to recognize Arthur's true magnitude. Mistaking his aloofness for lack of love for her, she had turned for consolation to Lancelot, whose devotion fed her pride. When Arthur makes her see the enormity of her crime, for from her sin came other sins until the once glorious brotherhood was torn asunder by murder, deceit, disloyalty and fornication, her pride is at last broken.

The punishment for *Guinevere*'s sin was her inability to have children. If Modred was no longer to be thought of as Arthur's son, other children were to be found for the model king for him to fulfil the most cherished of all Victorian roles for men, that of the *paterfamilias*. Tennyson solves the difficulty by casting his knights as his foster sons. Their various failings to live up to the ideal highlight Arthur's own perfection but they also serve to demonstrate that there are no viable alternatives to Arthur's way. Gawain's irresponsible rashness, Tristram's unapologetic sensuality, Lancelot's debilitating obsession with love, all signal the triumph of sense over soul. Unlike their King, they fail to place duty above desire, a point driven forcibly home in the idyll "The Holy Grail" when they rush off on a quest for personal salvation while Arthur alone makes the responsible choice of staying at home to defend his kingdom against an invader. Likewise, the women in the *Idylls*, with the exception of Enid, the model submissive wife, serve as cautionary examples of the inversion of the natural order of things when female sensuality is allowed to prevail over manly reason. *Guinevere* redeemed herself through penitent service but the false women of the *Idylls*, unrepentant in their egotism, glory in their power to destroy men. Opting to live outside the confines of the home and family, they seek dominion over men.

The one knight Tennyson's readers refused to perceive as a failure, despite the author's later attempt to rewrite him, was the youthful and idealistic Galahad. He had made his first appearance in 1842 in a short poem called "Sir Galahad" and had then been conceived as "the type of chastity" (Mancoff 1995: 118), an ideal youth to complement Arthur, the ideal man. Tennyson closely

followed the medieval tradition which had cast Galahad as the most morally pure of Arthur's knights. The illegitimate son of Lancelot, he redeemed his father's sin by taking the vow of chastity. His absolute moral perfection was evidenced by his incomparable beauty and prowess. Preordained to be the only one of the Round Table knights to comprehend the full mystery of the Grail, he died in raptures straight afterwards and was transported to heaven to rule over Sarras, the city of angels. Tennyson's Galahad is an exuberant Victorian youth on the brink of manhood, a bright boy knight unburdened by manly cares who is driven by high idealism to seek an unearthly reward for his dedicated service. He quickly entered the Victorian iconography as a symbol of dedicated and unquestioning service. His example was held up by parents and schoolmasters alike as a role model for youth and he inspired generations of young men to self-abnegating service at home and abroad. A young questing knight who dies for an abstract ideal, Galahad became an appropriate symbol for patriotic self-sacrifice and ended his long reign over the imagination of men commemorating the dead of the imperial wars and then the Great War in memorial glass and stone as a younger version of St George, the patron saint of England. Though Tennyson later came to question Galahad's single-minded quest for personal salvation in "The Holy Grail", condemning it as shirking one's duty to the community at large, his readers preferred the ever-striving, ever-idealistic Galahad as an endearing personification of unlimited adolescent potential. (Mancoff 1995: 118–128, Poulson 1999: 112–120)

Sanctioned by the Queen and reflecting popular attitudes of the day, Tennyson's treatment of Arthur and his knights served for many Victorians as a guide to true gentlemanly behaviour. Nevertheless, his view of modern chivalry was challenged by writers and artists who accused him of having distorted Camelot by making it too Victorian. If Tennyson's and his followers' attitude to the legend was moral, theirs was romantic. They went back to Malory for vivid colour and moving humanity which Tennyson's reductive treatment was seen as having removed from the stories. The Pre-Raphaelites especially chose to put their emphasis on love. William Morris, for instance, in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858) refused to condemn Guinevere on moral grounds and celebrated her instead as a sensual and splendid woman. Throughout the 1860s and 70s the Pre-Raphaelites glorified love with a frank yet decorous sensuousness which provided a more accessible alternative to Tennyson's government-sanctioned high-mindedness. The Victorian courtly love ultimately owed as much to them as it did to Tennyson. (Girouard 1981: 180, 184–196)

Imperial Warriors

The 1850s and 60s, when the Victorians were adapting the amatory aspects of chivalry to fit their own needs, were also decades which witnessed a sea change in the education of upper and middle class boys. Here, too, chastity would be at

a premium as the educational system geared itself to producing latter-day crusaders who would carry law, order and the English way to all corners of the expanding empire. The smithy where the future empire-builders were to be forged were the reformed public schools.

Here the seminal influence is Dr Arnold's who was headmaster of Rugby from 1827 to 1842. Dismayed by the unregenerate nature of boys in his charge, he set about instilling in them the spirit of Christian manliness. Before his reforms at Rugby, the few public schools there were had been quite lawless places where the boys, when not in class, had been left very much to their own devices. Arnold, by selecting like-minded masters and enlisting the help of the Sixth Formers, infused the school with a high tone of moral earnestness. By sharing the responsibility of running the school with student 'praepostors', he sought to hasten the onset of responsible manhood in his pupils, which he saw as the only remedy to counteract their disruptive behaviour. His close interest in every boy's progress fostered the emergence of the school's corporate identity, master and pupil alike taking their lead from the charismatic headmaster. Though his influence on his pupils and masters was profound, Arnold's wider impact was largely due to his *Life*, written by A. P. Stanley, which cast the legendary teacher as a Carlylean hero and a model Christian gentleman, claiming a new prestige for the hitherto denigrated job of the schoolmaster and dispelling middle class fears about the public school as a lawless and Godless place. (Adams 1995: 65–75)

Although Arnold's presence was to loom large behind public school reform in the second half of the century, in many cases effected by his former masters who had moved on to become headmasters of other schools, the two most cherished aspects of Late Victorian public school life, athleticism and chivalry, were missing at Rugby. Arnold did not object to organized games but his pupils' spiritual welfare had been more important to him than their physical one and he had been actively hostile to chivalry on the grounds that it set personal allegiance before God and honour before justice. (Girouard 1981: 164)

The games ethic, so prevalent in the public schools later in the century, owed its popularity to a marked shift of emphasis in the definition of Christian manliness brought about by a number of mid-century crises involving Britain's status as a world power. The revolutionary upheavals on the Continent, the disasters of the Crimean War (1853–56) and the Indian Mutiny (1857) raised troubling questions about the vigour of the nation. If Britain was to preserve her pre-eminence among nations, the principles of educating the men who would run the empire had to be reconsidered. The answer to the problem of how to shape physically and mentally fit men able to deal with the many problems Britain's leading role in the world would pose was found in the ideology of the movement dubbed by its detractors "muscular Christianity" because of its emphasis on physical fitness. The ideologues of the movement focused on Jesus as a fighter and the concept of a Christian's life as a struggle. This concept itself

was not new but the emphasis on corporality was, and it was this aspect which was enthusiastically embraced by masters and boys alike, for it provided a welcome alternative to the two other versions of Christian manliness popular at the time, Dr Arnold's ascetic regimen of earnest living and Tractarian reserve. (Adams 1995: 109, Michie 1999: 416)

It was in response to Tractarianism that the chief proponent of the movement, the Reverend Charles Kingsley, had developed his new concept of manliness. The Tractarian ideal of manly conduct was like Dr Arnold's, or Kingsley's own, Carlylean but what roused Kingsley's ire was the smug asceticism preached by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. While there was nothing exceptionable in their emphasis on celibacy as an essentially masculine and martial discipline, with venerable origins in early Christian monasticism, their doctrine of 'reserve' elicited alarm in the non-initiates. Like the middle-class prophets of earnestness, the Tractarians had formulated their ideal as a deliberate affront to aristocratic norms of masculinity. The martial values of the aristocrat were to be substituted by the devotional ones of the priest. (Adams 1995: 85) J. A. Froude put it starkly: "To make England cease to produce great men – as we count greatness – and for poetry, courage, daring, enterprise, resolution and broad honest understanding, substitute devotion, endurance, humility, self-denial, sanctity and faith. This was the question at issue" (1988: 150).

The Tractarian response to doubt had been the recovery of the all but lost Anglo-Catholic tradition in their search for a more substantial basis of faith in an age when reliance on the Scriptures alone was becoming vulnerable under the onslaught of biblical criticism. They had gone back to the Elizabethan *via media* and beyond to claim for the Church of England the security of Apostolic succession which Evangelicalism lacked. (Gilmour 1996: 77–81) The Tractarian insistence on going back to the Church Fathers to recover lost origins inevitably brought charges of 'Popery' and a wide-spread suspicion that Roman priests in disguise were undermining the Anglican Church from within. Matters were not improved by the Tractarian aversion to Evangelical enthusiasm which they found vulgar and coarse. To emphasize their own depth of decorous feeling, they adopted the strategy of 'reserve' – self-assertion through emphatic lack of display. Whereas the Evangelicals "wore their hearts on their sleeve", the Tractarians "concealed their emotions, lest by advertising them they should seem to cheapen their love" (Newsome 1967: 23–24). "[S]elf-restraint and abstinence ... in the publication of the most sacred doctrines of our religion" (1883: 49–50) was the message which the movement's charismatic leader J. H. Newman preached to hordes of enthralled undergraduates from the pulpit of St Mary's at Oxford. Newman's studied reticence, and the peculiar mannerisms this inspired in his followers, to the hostile observer seemed dandiacal and effete, the charges traditionally levelled by the middle class against aristocrats. This kind of elitism grated on Kingsley's nerves. In a letter in 1851 he wrote:

“In all that school, there is an element of foppery, even in dress and manners, a fastidious, maundering, die-away effeminacy, which is mistaken for purity and refinement; and I confess myself unable to cope with it, so alluring is it to the minds of effeminate and luxurious aristocracy.” (1902: 260) By the 1860s, when Kingsley publicly quarrelled with Newman, he had formulated his own version of Carlylean heroism which ironically marked a return to essentially aristocratic norms of masculinity after a half-century of middle-class condemnation.

Kingsley belonged to a small but influential group known as Christian Socialists who, inspired by Digby’s code of modern chivalry and Carlyle’s injunction to the governing classes to rule disinterestedly and justly, had tried to alleviate the lot of the working class by trying to protect them from the manipulations of the exploiting classes. Kingsley had always been a keen sportsman, but soon after becoming a Christian Socialist he started to glorify physical fitness as a crucial part of manliness. In this he was probably inspired by the example of Thomas Hughes, a versatile and enthusiastic athlete par excellence. He was a modern knight come to life. A younger son of a Berkshire squire, he had been brought up on Toryism and Walter Scott. At Rugby, where he had been captain of both the football and cricket teams, he had come under the influence of Dr Arnold and at the university he had discovered Carlyle. An indifferent lawyer but a first-rate sportsman, he exuded geniality and good fellowship which were most agreeably combined with chivalric virtues and a simple Christian faith. (Girouard 1981: 130–136)

The tag ‘muscular Christianity’ became attached to Hughes and Kingsley after they had written novels to expound their doctrine of manliness. Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857), describing a plucky boy’s progress to self-knowledge in the idealized setting of Dr Arnold’s Rugby and Kingsley’s *Westward Ho* (1855) and *Two Years Ago* (1857), featuring plucky knights errant roaming the world in Elizabethan and modern times respectively, had tough but pure-minded heroes whose enthusiasm for chivalry only rivals their enthusiasm for Protestantism and the British Empire. In reply to their critics’ accusations of propagating simple-minded brawniness, Hughes and Kingsley drew a distinction between the true muscular Christians and mere musclemen. In *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861) Hughes explains the difference:

The muscleman seems to have no belief whatever as to the purpose for which his body has been given him, except some hazy idea that it is to go up and down the world with him, belabouring men and captivating women for his benefit or pleasure ... Whereas, so far as I know, the least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that man’s body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men. (Quoted in Girouard 1981: 142)

Kingsley based his argument on the opposition of the two types of medieval Christian manliness, monastic and chivalric. The monastic ideal was for him essentially feminine, the mortification of the flesh having unsexed the monks and in so doing having diseased their minds and hearts. The chivalric ideal arose as a healthy alternative to effete monasticism, embracing all activities of human life, including procreation. Love purified of carnality in the Victorian version of courtly love would not drag man down but lift him to a higher moral plane. A pure man would ardently love his wife but would steer clear of sexual matters, in thought, word or deed, before his union with his beloved had been properly sanctified. Keeping impure thoughts at bay would involve a constant struggle and here strenuous physical activity came into its own. (Girouard 1981: 143, Houghton 1985: 376–378) He earned his nickname, ‘the great Apostle of the Flesh’, through his glorification of man’s animal spirits which he had derived from the Platonic concept of *thumos*, meaning “robust energy, spiritual courage and physical vitality” (Newsome 1961: 197). His combination of Christian piety and the celebration of boisterous physical activity, reminiscent of the knights of old, proved irresistible to schoolboys and their masters alike.

In 1864 the Clarendon Report, a result of an investigation by a Royal Commission into the state of the public schools, occasioned by several student rebellions exposing the chaos reigning in their management, called for an extensive reform of their curriculum and organization. (Boyd 2003: 14–15) They were to be turned into the breeding ground for the nation’s elite, where the sons of middle-class traders and industrialists could be taught proper aristocratic manners. The wealthy members of the bourgeoisie had earlier in the century been debarred from entering the Society on the grounds that they lacked the social polish and moral sentiments of gentlemen. But as the power base of landed aristocracy was eroded by the free market economy, recruiting new members of the elite from the hitherto despised commercial classes became imperative. Their self-seeking interests were to be suppressed by instilling in them aristocratic notions of disinterested leadership and public duty. The threat of democracy getting out of hand could be contained by making the schools more elitist. (Houghton 1985: 283) To turn middle-class boys into gentlemen, they had to be removed from their habitual domestic environment. To this end, boarding at school was made obligatory and the schools’ recruitment policy became nation-based. This change of setting was meant to help shift the boys’ allegiance from their family and class to the national elite with whom they were encouraged to identify. Fidelity to one’s school would naturally grow to embrace Queen and Country and its imperial concerns abroad. The schools’ social hierarchy, based on age rather than wealth, was to encourage peer solidarity and offer the boys a chance to develop their leadership skills. (Boyd 2003: 14–15)

The first headmaster to actively encourage organized games as a means of building character was G. E. L. Cotton, a former master at Dr Arnold’s Rugby

who became headmaster of Marlborough in 1852. Marlborough, founded in 1843, was one of the growing number of new public schools established in mid-Victorian years to cater for the needs of the growing middle-class population who sent their children to public schools to turn them into gentlemen. Marlborough had got off to a bad start, the ineptness of its first headmaster having led to a complete breakdown of discipline in 1851. Cotton introduced Arnoldian methods of governorship and set about introducing a civilized out-of-door life for boys outside learning hours. Cotton and other reformers after him adapted ‘muscular Christianity’ to their own needs, largely inspired by Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, which demonstrated in vivid detail how games could be used in building both individual character and team spirit. By the 1870s games had become compulsory in most schools and by the end of the century they had become the predominant element in public school education. (Girouard 1981: 165–169)

Team games, as a middle-class alternative to the aristocratic sports of hunting, racing and boxing popular among Regency dandies, were first developed by the universities. In the 1820s and 30s Oxford and Cambridge had started to admit growing numbers of undergraduates from the professional classes who found the patrician sporting life too costly and its attendant betting and womanising reprehensible on moral grounds. (Ibid.: 233) With the team games they could establish their own rules which favoured fellowship, discipline and submerging the individual effort in that of the group over the sporting dandy’s extreme individualism. Added a fair dose of chivalry and the sanction of the prophets of earnestness, games like cricket and football, properly played, could furnish a young man with a code for life. This code glorified team spirit, fair play, unselfishness and high-mindedness both in victory and defeat. The moral value of team games received official recognition in the Clarendon Report which recommended their introduction in the framework of public school reform as helping “to form some of the most valuable social qualities and manly virtues”. (Girouard 1981: 233) Once team games had received public approval as a worthy and gentlemanly pastime, the boys who played them at school and university could go on playing them well into their middle age and beyond with utter seriousness. Inevitably, the philosophy and language of the games was carried over into everyday life and became part of the gentlemanly code. The gentlemanly view of life as a game, to be played by a set of rules derived from chivalry, as it filtered down the social scale, became so entrenched in the national psyche that modern commentators on Englishness, whether hostile or friendly to the gentlemanly ethics, recognize it as the chief national characteristic (See Aslet 1997, Paxman 1999).

The Game for which all other games were a mere rehearsal was the imperial one, played against recalcitrant natives and rival colonial powers. The Empire’s many little wars and the theatre of action which it provided for individual acts of bravery and endeavour, made it the most glorious playing field of all.

Characteristically, Henry Newbolt's poem *Vitai Lampada* with the now hackneyed and derided refrain "Play up! Play up! and play the game!" links the school playing fields and the battlefields of Empire. Newbolt was a graduate of Clifton College where the cult of games was taken to extremes. Founded in 1862 to cater for the sons of Bristol businessmen, the school was saturated in chivalry from the start, its first headmaster, John Perceval, another export from Rugby, working tirelessly to infuse his pupils and masters alike with the romantic spirit of chivalric service. Though some of the tradesmen's sons inevitably went back to their roots, a high proportion of old Cliftonians chose to enter the army and colonial service where for very little financial reward they could live out their lives as latter-day paladins. Three hundred of them served in the Boer War where forty-four gave up their lives. To commemorate their sacrifice, a statue of a young knight in armour was raised, gazing dreamily across the cricket fields to the distant hills of South Africa. In the nearby chapel, his comrades in arms in memorial glass, likewise in armour, mourn the dead of other colonial wars and, inevitably, the Great War. (Girouard 1981: 171–174, 233)

When the call came in 1914, young men rushed to the front. The great opportunity to test the qualities which generations of upper-class Englishmen had nurtured in themselves and had preached to the classes further down the social scale had finally arrived. The inevitability of a showdown between the great powers had been in the air since the 1870s when the first signs had appeared that Britain was losing its lead as the world's foremost power. Ambitious rivals like Germany and the United States were catching up with Britain in industrial production and Britain's mastery of the seas was being challenged by her rivals' growing navies. The gentlemanly response to such anxieties was to prepare even more strenuously for the fight to come. At school and university, in boys' clubs' and boys' brigades, in the literature of romance and adventure which proliferated in the decades before the war broke out, the coming struggle was imagined in chivalric terms as a glorious adventure not to be missed. It took time for the inglorious horror of the modern war, which turned an individual, no matter how brave and dashing, into a grey cog in the inhuman machinery of total destruction, to sink in. When it did, chivalry as a viable code for living lost much of its force. It endured well into the 1920s and 30s, and far longer in the colonies and dominions, but it never recovered its pre-war conviction. The war had united all classes as never before and to postpone giving universal suffrage to men, and a little later even to women, was no longer possible. The aristocracy, which had held on so long to power by recruiting into its ranks the aspiring middle classes, failed to win over the mass man and mass woman. Their demise as a ruling class also signalled the end of the unquestioning acceptance by all men as universal of the creed which had been called into being to meet the needs of that particular class and had justified its rule.

GENTLEMEN BORN

Though the Victorian gentlemanly ideal was ostensibly universally applicable and attainable by any man who undertook to train himself according to the precepts of chivalry, there was a tacit understanding that gentlemen of birth were a cut above all other gentlemen, even if the latter were also public-school-educated and looked and acted like real gentlemen. A gentleman made inevitably lacked the total self-confidence of a gentleman born, for no amount of training could act as a substitute for a good family tree and the self-assurance which followed from it. A gentleman made was always aware, and so were all other gentlemen around him, that he was second class at best.

True gentility was determined by the possession of the right sort of blood, as the Latin word *genus* implies, and the idea that greatness is attendant on birth goes back to the beginnings of the notion of aristocracy itself. Founders of great lineages throughout history have been the natural leaders of their community. As a family establishes its territorial influence, its power over an area tends to become hereditary and be perceived as a right. Authority thus comes to be seen as 'innate', the quality of high-born men who are called upon to rule and who are marked off from the low-born by their capacity for disinterested public service. (Powis 1984: 20, 48, 69). The highest form of service is the service of the state and this the aristocracy claimed as their exclusive right and privilege until challenged in the nineteenth century by the rising middle class. Nevertheless, the age-old belief that it was the quality of the blood that allotted a man a place among the rulers did not lose its appeal. It was partly due to the aristocracy's willingness in the second half of the century to share power with commoners in order to cling to it longer and partly due to the romantic veneration of tradition on the part of the newcomers to their ranks who, though not to the 'manor' born, aspired to the standards of living and behaviour which would mark them off as belonging to the privileged elite. They were willing to put aside their materialism which had made their rise possible and embrace the chivalrous idea of selfless service, the hallmark of the aristocratic class.

The British aristocracy had avoided revolution in the nineteenth century by co-opting into their ranks the able and the discontented from the classes below, but at the cost of the erosion of their own power base. The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, 1884 and 1885 had gradually transferred power from the landowners and farmers to the townspeople and industrial labourers. But, paradoxically, as their actual hold on power weakened, their hold on popular imagination grew. As P. Mason has pointed out, admiration for the ruling class and the ideals its members were thought to stand for could have been one of the cementing factors of society in Britain before 1914:

Social difference was never so great as at the time of the Liberal government of 1906. To many of the upper and middle classes the measures that government

and in particular Lloyd George's budget (the "people's budget" of 1909 to carry out an ambitious scheme of social reform, to be financed by a land tax, increased death duties and a supertax on incomes over £ 3,000 – P. R.) seemed to mark the end of an age – as indeed they did – and the beginning of an end to inequality and privilege. But the taste of the day showed an astonishing nostalgia for aristocratic rule. (1982: 11)

Part of the attraction here for the lower classes was the presumed universality of the gentlemanly code of honour and the prospect of social ascent:

One reason why the idea of the gentleman was so widely accepted was that no one was quite sure who was a gentleman and who was not. There was no closed caste and a great many people used the term in such a way that it did not exclude themselves – or at least what they hoped their sons might become. There was thus a wide range of professional people and of those who would now be called white collar workers who identified themselves with the upper classes in the sense that they hoped to join their ranks. The typical middle-class Englishman was a snob; he loved a lord. He did not think he could become a lord but he did think his son might become a gentleman. He would very likely have put himself in a slightly higher social bracket than a detached observer might have thought fitting and for that reason he felt he was on the same *side* as the ruling classes. (ibid.: 9)

Mason speaks about Englishmen but his statement can well be extended to include anglicized Scots like Buchan, who has been frequently and offhandedly blamed for careerism and snobbery, or in M. Green's memorable phrase, for his "susceptibility to the company of the elect" (1990: 86).

A conservative and a romantic, Buchan was definitely drawn to the romance of the past, a characteristic shared by many of his fellow countrymen, not least his great example, Sir Walter Scott. No matter how humble their station in life, Scots through ages have loved to trace their ancestry back to a great nobleman, even if the connection is hardly tenuous. This can be to a large extent ascribed to the Celtic clan system which in the Scottish Highlands survived well into the nineteenth century and was only destroyed by capitalist agriculture. The relationship between the chief and the clan members was paternalistic, that of a stern and all-powerful father to his children from whom he expected absolute loyalty. In the Lowlands the clan system had disappeared earlier but the old ties of loyalty and pride in ancestry still held. Buchan's son William has remarked:

Because of the clan system, which exists in the Lowlands also, although in a different form from the Highlands, there are few Scots who cannot claim a connection, however far-fetched, with some noble or at least long-established family. This is one of the reasons for the abiding Scottish passion for genealogy, for noting and collating relationships into the farthest reaches of cousinage. (1982: 77)

His father's parents had been Lowlanders on both sides of the family but there was a fond Buchan belief that they could trace their branch of the family back to

the Buchans of Auchmacoy, an ancient house in Aberdeenshire. John Buchan plays down the connection in his autobiography as not having been properly proven but his son has shown how seriously he took the whole matter. In 1895 John's uncle had applied to the Lyon Court, the highest heraldic authority in Scotland, for leave to use the arms of Auchmacoy. Permission was given, with the qualification that of the two Auchmacoy sunflowers only one was to be used on the Buchan crest. William remembers his father using the heraldic sunflower on his personal things and when he was made a peer on being appointed Governor-General to Canada he retained the sunflower on his coat-of-arms, supported by a stag and a falcon. The Buchans of Aberdeenshire are a numerous and very ancient clan, one of the old 'tribes of the land'. In 1830 the Lyon Court had recognized the Buchans as descendants of the ancient Celtic Earls of Buchan who had held their lands since time immemorial. (Ibid.: 79) The name Buchan is first recorded around AD 1000 in the *Book of Deer*. It is either of Brythonic and Scottish Gaelic origin and denotes a cattle-breeding place in both cases. The province of Buchan continues to be a major cattle-farming area and is the home of the Aberdeen Angus breed. (Mackay 2002: 16) Tradition has it that one of the younger sons of the family had gone south to serve King James IV at Stirling and his descendants had settled in Stirlingshire. Though impoverished, they retained their fierce pride in their illustrious lineage and Buchan was probably speaking only half in jest about having felt 'a proprietary interest' in the high history of Scotland as a child (MHD 45). As his son observes, awareness of such an inheritance must have given the Buchans a sense of standing apart, of being special, and Buchan's fondness for the company of people with notable ancestors can be better understood as respect for ancient lineage. He is known never to have interrupted a bore, provided he came from an ancient and notable family. His romantic nature saw not the dull individual in front of him but looked beyond the unprepossessing features of his interlocutor for a glimpse of the glories of the past. To quote William again:

His strong sense of history, coupled with knowledge gained from immensely wide reading, ensured that he could begin a conversation with a stranger and, in no time at all, be immersed in genealogical complexities which the latter, till then, had thought known only to himself. I would see him see *through* some dull, red-faced man in a tweed suit to his Cavalier ancestor, and see the man's beefy, discontented, suspicious countenance take on a momentary look of pride and pleasure, as if carried back to braver and simpler things. All that I am saying, really is that JB was a true romantic, his rare failures with other people occurred when he came up against a good intelligence frozen by cynicism, iron-bound by some grievance, or distorted by jealousy. (1982: 49)

In the course of his political career Buchan befriended several prime ministers, presidents and two English kings. He esteemed especially highly the Victorian qualities of King George V, on the occasion of whose Jubilee he wrote a commemorative book, *The King's Grace*, to celebrate his reign. He was

appalled by the antics of Edward VIII and was greatly relieved by the latter's abdication, George VI being more amenable to his conservative tastes. He even got to play the king in real life. For two years he stood in for George V as his representative at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, residing for ten days in 1933 and 1934 at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. As Governor-General he represented the King in Canada and took the dominion to war in his name in 1939.

The nature and qualities necessary for leadership he explored in a number of his books, most poignantly in *A Prince of the Captivity*, where he tries to find a solution to the problem extremely acute at the time, of what kind of a leader could withstand the rise of fascism and dictatorship generally in Europe. *The Courts of the Morning* examines the nature of dictatorship on the model of a fictional South American republic. In *The Blanket of the Dark* the central issue is what makes a good king. Hereditary right to the throne and the abilities needed to govern well are contrasted and the balance tips in favour of ability. Nevertheless, kingly blood possesses its own special mystique and this Buchan examines lovingly in the collection of interrelated short stories titled *The Path of the King*.

Before we proceed with the book which traces romantically the descent of royal blood through generations, echoing wonderfully the canons of contemporary historiography, let us look at what Buchan thought worthwhile emphasising about the nature of kingship when he summed up the twenty-five-year reign of George V in *The King's Grace*:

Majesty and Grace are in the royal office. Monarchy in some form is universal, for it seems to be a necessary in government. Elsewhere it is elective and temporary, as in republics; or as in dictatorships, enforced and undefined in term. But hereditary monarchy is not only more enduring than such types, it has a special quality which they can never reach. A king who reigns not by election or a sudden popular impulse but by right, has a sanction behind him which no transient dictator or president can claim. His authority is interwoven with the life and thought of his people. If, as in Britain, his ancestry goes back to our dim beginnings, the office embodies the whole history of the nation. Because it is beyond popular caprice, it is, as I have said, the centre of a nation's conscious unity, a link between its past and future. It becomes a symbol, which needs no artificial sanctity to give it power. With this firm foundation Britain is enabled to be a bold pioneer in new construction, just as the man who would cast his spear far must first find solid footing. It preserves her from the wastefulness of revolution, and from the futile type of revolution which we call reaction. (KG 137)

It is also of some interest for our purposes to look at what qualities he found praiseworthy in George V whom he knew well and greatly esteemed. He brings out his profound humanity, his simplicity and common touch. He stresses his conciliatory role in the crises which have befallen his people in his reign and his

steadfastness and courage in facing them. He has been a good father to his people and that is his true achievement, for

[t]he power of the Throne lies in what it is: but the authority of the King lies both in what he is and in what he has done. /.../ Leadership does not consist only in a strong man imposing his will upon others. In that sense it has no meaning for a British Sovereign. But in a far profounder sense the King has shown himself a leader, since the true task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, since the greatness is already there. That truth is the basis of all religion, it is the only justification for democracy, it is the chart and compass of our mortal life. (Ibid.: 138)

The kind of greatness Buchan has ascribed to George V informs also the carriers of the royal blood, sometimes against their better judgement, in *The Path of the King*, the fictional line finding its triumphant climax in Abraham Lincoln, Buchan's favourite American and ideal democrat. It is also a story of the magnificent destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, and as befits an imperial nation, it transcends the boundaries earthly and spiritual. The collection serves also as a fitting introduction both to the theme of chivalry in his work and the gallery of characters whose virtue is carried in their blood.

Mysteries of the blood (*The Path of the King*)

Published in the middle of his career (in book form the collection appeared in 1921), it had nevertheless been planned already in 1898 when Buchan was still at Oxford. His Newdigate Prize Poem on the Pilgrim Fathers contains references to it and his list of projected books from the same time includes the title *The Path of the King*, "to be begun after taking my degree" (quoted in Adam Smith 1965: 272). The poem, more concerned with the spirit of heroic adventure than the historical voyage, contains lines which could serve as a synopsis of the kind of characters we would encounter in the later book:

No faltering shakes their steadfastness whose ways
Lie on the King's Path to the end of days ...
Though o'er our path the wrack of battle roll
No wars perplex the Sabbath of our soul.
What though the body be a sacrifice
To the fierce sun or the inclement skies,
The lurking wild beast or the savage king,
We are not sad for all their threatening.
Life is not meat nor drink nor raiment fine,
But a man's courage and the fire divine.

(Quoted *ibid.*: 65)

Buchan's youth coincided with the high imperial noon of Victoria's empire when Englishmen's minds were fired with elevated ideas of their own

greatness. The 'manifest destiny' of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' to spread its seed across the globe and open up areas for development which God himself had laid aside for them and which were only temporarily in the custody of the natives, was seen as unfolding daily. The mystique of the 'blood' and the high destiny of God's chosen people fired the empire-builders' minds with visions of a global brotherhood of Anglo-Saxondom. Imperial visionaries like Cecil Rhodes or Sir Arthur Milner envisioned a world ruled and administered by Britain in close conjunction with her white dominions, not cynically but benevolently, because of all possible ways of government the British one was just the best. That God approved was obvious because no other nation had achieved such greatness in industry and commerce or been so successful in spreading the Word. That God himself was an Englishman, at least in his sympathies, was proved by the marching forward of the Protestant creed, while Catholicism was languishing.

Imperial historiography and popular literature extolled the heroes who had made it all possible. They singled out certain episodes and men who embodied the qualities which had made the 'race' great. The late Victorians were not unduly rigorous in their terms and where we would now make scrupulous distinction between 'race' and 'nation', they did not. The words were used interchangeably and when they spoke about the stupendous achievements of the 'Anglo-Saxon race', they could have just the 'English people' in mind. The Protestant Anglo-Irish and Scotsmen were frequently bracketed with the English, as in the imperial and global context the national distinctions did not seem important, though they might, of course, matter to individuals. Theirs was a subsidiary role anyway because the mastermind of global expansion was English. An important distinction should be made, though, about the catholic Irish and their brethren in the Scottish Highlands. Celtic or Gaelic values did not enjoy such a high esteem as they do today. Poor and backward, dreamy and strange in their loyalties, there seemed nothing they could offer except cheap labour and romantic lost causes. Celtic mysticism looked enervated when compared to Teutonic vigour. Among other things the pre-eminence of the Germanic stock was rather unsettlingly proved by the economic competition and imperial challenge of the united Germany.

When *The Path of the King* was first published between October 1920 and October 1921 in the magazine *Outward Bound*, the most dangerous challenger to Britain's naval superiority, Germany, had just been conclusively beaten. Not only had the Empire won the war. It had also considerably expanded. Germany's and Russia's advance towards India, the jewel in the imperial crown and the *raison d'être* of the whole imperial enterprise, had been halted. In Africa Rhodes' dream of the complete mastery of the continent by people of the British stock seemed no longer an impossible one. But, best of all, after a thousand years Christians, led by a British general, had again taken Jerusalem, the heart of Christendom. Protestantism had triumphed where Catholicism had failed. Moreover, all the white dominions had stood loyally by the Mother

Country and the realization of the Late-Victorian dream of a close-knit global federation of the white colonies of settlement with its heart at Westminster seemed imminent. In the hour of triumph the extent to which the United States had hijacked Britain's role in the global market went unnoticed. And anyway, the Americans were still Anglo-Saxon and Protestant enough to be considered blood brothers. Though the harsh economic and political reality would soon undermine British confidence, for a while in the early 1920s it seemed that the triumph of the 'Anglo-Saxon race' was complete.

The Path of the King is a collection of carefully crafted vignettes of national history where the most salient achievements of the 'race' are brought out in bold relief. Though to some contemporary critics Buchan's treatment of them seemed dated, his friend G. M. Trevelyan, the author of the century's most popular general history of England which was to be published a few years later, was very enthusiastic:

The historical vignettes are each clear-cut, bright, full of the spirit of each passing age, psychologically interesting, and yet with a moral 'uplift' in them that 'done me a lot of good', and a unity to the whole book given by the entrancing mystery of heredity /.../ And it's rightly tragic enough, as life is, but yet very comforting and strengthening that in spite of all it *goes on* and even gets somewhere sometimes and anyway is fun all along if you have courage. (Quoted in Adam Smith 1965: 272)

The two men shared the same determined kind of conservative romanticism and moral optimism which today, when the canon singles out the distressed and the embittered, might look singular but, as D. Cannadine has shown, was the dominant mood of the interwar period. For the generation who had been through the war, the up-lift Trevelyan speaks of was reassuring in a world where all former certainties were seen as being irrevocably eroded. Homely conservatism with the optimistic touch was popular with all classes and was deliberately preached by politicians, among others, and with great success, by Stanley Baldwin, Buchan's friend and Prime Minister (2003: 160).

Buchan was fascinated by the 'ifs' of history, the mysterious ways in which Providence operates to bring about the desired results, in the case of *The Path of the King* these being the triumph of the chosen race and the true church. "God never allows waste," exclaims the Scholar in the prologue to the book. It befalls to him to expound Buchan's romantic theory that greatness is not necessarily passed down aristocratic lineages or great houses, though it may have begun there. Descent is important but in the cosseted elder sons the fire may fizzle out. The younger sons with a fortune to make are more likely to carry on the spark which, having smouldered in the ashes for centuries, will flare up and illuminate the whole world when the right time comes. A magnificent vision unfolds before the narrator:

I saw the younger sons carry the royal blood far down among the people, down even into the kennels of the outcast. Generations follow, oblivious of the high beginnings, but there is that in the stock which is fated to endure. The sons and daughters blunder and sin and perish, but the race goes on, for there is a fierce stuff of life in it. It sinks and rises again and blossoms at haphazard into virtue or vice, since the ordinary moral laws do not concern its mission. Some rags of greatness always cling to it, the dumb faith that sometime and somehow that blood drawn from kings it never knew will be royal again. Though nature is wasteful of material things, there is no waste of spirit. And then after long years there comes, unheralded and unlooked for, the day of the Appointed Time. (PK 29)

The book opens with a scene somewhere in Scandinavia in the Dark Ages. On the eve of a major raid a young Viking prince of royal blood has his future foretold. The seed of his loins is to win a great kingdom in the west, beyond the Far Isles, but he is not to see it himself. The raid fails and the men of the prince's household are annihilated by their rivals, the Danes, in what would one day be Normandy. The prince, the sole survivor of the carnage, seeks shelter from an old Frankish couple. Being good Christians, they take him in.

It is notable that Buchan traces the beginning of his path of kings to the Scandinavians. This may have something to do with a Lowlander's preference for his Germanic forebears over his Celtic ones, but may also be a reflection of the prevalent attitudes of his youth.

By the mid-nineteenth century the admiration for the Germanic ancestors of the English race had reached cult proportions. It had started as a reaction of an increasingly self-confident nation against the imposed standards of imperial Rome. The neo-classical precepts had in time come to be seen as unduly restrictive and in their search for a truly national ideal the English had hopefully looked towards the pre-conquest England. As scholarship about the precise nature of the Dark Ages migrations was scanty, the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians were readily classed together as Goths, the outward manifestation of the new English nationalism thus assuming the 'Gothic' guise.

From the start the term operated as a "semantic vortex" (Sage 1998: 92). It generally meant 'English' but had different connotations for different social groups. From the Whig point of view the 'Goths' were "a healthy freedom-loving set of Northern tribes" who had thrown off the Roman yoke and bequeathed to their descendants the English constitution and the English Common Law. In this sense the term sometimes included the Celts, or at least the Druids, and carried the associations 'English', 'Protestant', 'democratic' and 'anti-Catholic'. For the Tories the set of connotations was slightly different. The emphasis for them was on the Anglo-Norman heritage (in the eighteenth century referred to as 'Saxon'), feudalism, hierarchy and Anglicanism. (Ibid.) After a long struggle with Hellenism in the first quarter of the nineteenth century the 'Goths' in art and architecture won the day and the 'Gothic revival'

in its various forms came to be established as the English national and imperial style. The Victorian cult of 'Anglo-Saxondom' owed probably also not a little to the Queen's and her German husband's successful effort of turning the rather ludicrous House of Hanover into a model of propriety.

The contemporary pseudo-science of physiognomy reinforced the idea of the Anglo-Saxon superiority over the Celts by claiming to be able to deduce the moral and intellectual character of persons and nations from their facial features. In C. Poulson's words:

It posited a hierarchy in which the Saxon was the superior race: it was their blood that ran in the veins of the successful middle classes and the aristocracy. The blue eyes, fair hair and complexion, broad brow, and tall and powerful physique were matched by qualities of decency and industriousness. Celts on the other hand were historically the subject race. Their low-browed, snub-nosed faces, their dark hair and eyes and their short stature signified the moral and physical degeneracy typical of the lower and criminal classes. They were regarded as superstitious, dishonest and unreliable. (1999: 57)

This led to some curious developments. Tennyson's King Arthur, the short dark Welshman of legend, was visualized by Tennyson himself and the artists who illustrated his *Idylls of the King* as tall and fair. Likewise his knights and queen display distinct Teutonic features, both in the poems and pictures. Some fanciful artists went even so far as to endow these supposedly late-Roman Celts with horned Viking helmets and chainmail. Although some people, notably Matthew Arnold, spoke up in defence of the Celts as imaginative and artistic people, and some Celtic decorative elements were incorporated into such pictures, as Poulson remarks, "the racial identity of the characters remains unaffected" (ibid.: 53).

In an ingenious way Buchan manages to combine the Whig and Tory interpretations of the nation's Anglo-Saxon origins. Having dealt with the fond Whig image of the freedom-loving Northern tribes in the first chapter, he proceeds with Anglo-Norman feudalism in the second. This is in accord with the new emphasis on national unity which became current in the 1890s and 1900s, as B. Porter has shown. The traditional Whig and Tory interpretations of the origin of ancient liberties, which had earlier been played off against each other, in the Late Victorian Britain facing an imperial challenge from other ambitious nations came to be seen as divisive. In the forging of the new imperial ethos, the Normans were assimilated into Anglo-Saxondom by tracing the common origins of both 'races' to the forests of Scandinavia. Consequently it was natural and easy for them to mix after the Conquest as they were already brothers in blood, the Saxons bringing to the union their 'solidity' and the Normans their 'spirit'. (2004: 207–208)

Almost two centuries have passed since the Viking prince was orphaned on the Frankish shore. The year is 1066 and Duke William of Normandy has just beaten the English King Harold at Hasting. One of Harold's wounded

housecarls is attacked by four ruffians from William's army and saved by the descendant of our Viking prince, a Norman knight.

Jehan the Hunter (or the Outborn, as he is known) is an early exponent of fair play. This very English quality is manifest in everything he does and it wins him the sympathy of the conquered 'race'. He receives as a reward a manor from his feudal lord in Fenland and puts down roots. The glowing love for his new home is thoroughly Buchan's own. After the war Buchan, who had lived in London, decided to settle in the country and bought an old manor house in the Cotswolds. The book was written in his new home and dedicated to his English wife to whom he first read it "by a Cotswold fire" (PK dedication). Like Buchan himself, Jehan sets about becoming an English country squire and every line in this chapter is redolent with Buchan's own excitement as he discovers the ways and mores of his new homeland.

The Jehan episode brings to the fore the central concern of the book – the nature of service, both public and spiritual. Jehan's forefather the Viking king had been the natural leader of his community. Though he traced his line back to Odin himself, his authority had derived from his personal qualities. As befits a tribal leader, he was the tallest and strongest in the land, the most cunning and brave in battle and a wise provider of his people in time of peace.

Jehan is the embodiment of benevolent feudal rule, the bringing of which to a land not yet in possession of it is the sole justification of the Norman Conquest. "A fair fight and then honest dealing and mercy" (PK 26) is to be its motto for Jehan and the moment peace is achieved the model soldier turns himself into an exemplary improving landowner:

Jehan forsook his woodcraft for the work of byre and furrow and sheepfold and the yield of his lands grew under his wardenship. He brought heavy French cattle to improve the little native breed, and made a garden of fruit trees where once had been only bent and sedge. The thralls wrought cheerfully for him, for he was a kindly master, and the freemen of the manor had no complaint against one who did impartial justice and respected their slow and ancient ways. (PK 34)

The appropriateness of Norman rule is sanctified by its ultimately Roman origin. By an ingenious device, a moss-grown Roman altar which greets Jehan by the wayside of his English home and the like of which he remembers from Normandy, Roman Britannia and Anglo-Norman England are brought together in a continuum of just government.

As for true religion, our model Norman landlord displays an early English disregard for popery. Having put down a lawless rebellion and restored peace to the land, as befits the bringer of good government, and lying dying in the field with his English brother-in-law and best friend, he declines the ministrations of the catholic priest by exclaiming: "What need is there of priest to help us two English on our way to God?" (PK 38)

The service rendered to the community by his descendant, the 'Wife of Flanders', is of a different nature. The richest woman in medieval Bryges, she

has built up an international trading empire. By opening up new avenues of trade and widening old ones, this early Free Trader can be seen as an embodiment of that trading spirit and enterprise which is at the heart of the nation's later greatness. She stands for English medieval links with Flanders through the wool trade and foreshadows the later imperial enterprise, her pioneering mission in world trade shedding interesting light on various Victorian middle-class ideas about economic liberalism and nationality. According to B. Porter, the apologists of Free Trade claimed it to be anti-imperial and anti-national and thus morally more palatable than imperial conquest and occupation. Trading was carried out by individuals who operated freely in the world community, their activities transcending nation states and empires, which the Free Traders lobby claimed would disappear in the natural course of events, like armies and navies, the instruments of suppression no longer needed in the global brotherhood of traders relating to each other on the basis of equality and mutual benefit in a world without barriers and boundaries. It was also a vehicle for spreading 'enlightenment' or 'civilization' in the world, traders bringing to other nations the benefits which 'progress' in England had made available to her citizens. Free Trade and the march of human progress were seen as synonymous, natural and irresistible because so manifestly beneficial to all parties concerned. It was Providence at work and the British traders were only fulfilling their destiny by helping it along. (2004: 94–96)

Sir Amery of Beaumanoir in Picardy in the next episode is an epitome of chivalric service. A devoted vassal of his saintly king Louis IX of France, he has followed him to the Holy Land to win admission to that *beata urbs* which is the work of no mortal hands. A model knight and crusader, he possesses every chivalric virtue. Well-versed in Christian and Saracen philosophy, his manners polished at illustrious courts, a devout son of the Holy Church, he is deemed by his king a perfect candidate to go on a Christianizing mission to the Mongol emperor of China, Kublai Khan. He carries the cross alone into a dark land and is martyred for his faith.

While men must travel to the ends of the earth in the service of God, the path to Heaven open to women is of a different kind. For them public duty and spiritual salvation are united in motherhood. This doctrine is expounded in the following episode by the 'daughter of God', the saintly Joan of Arc, to Countess Catherine of Beaumanoir, a girl dissatisfied with the emptiness of her life and yearning for greater things than the drudgery of marriage: "Bethink you of the blessedness. Every wife is like Mother of God – she has the hope of bearing a saviour of mankind. She is the channel of the eternal purpose of Heaven". (PK 83) This inclusion of Joan of Arc in the pageant of national history is an interesting one. If Sir Galahad had been created by Tennyson as the bright boy knight for the emulation of young men, girls were told to emulate Jeanne d'Arc. According to D. Mancoff her image enjoyed "an unprecedented popularity in late Victorian Britain", her French nationality and the crucial role she played in

the defeat of the English in the Hundred Years War conveniently forgotten. She existed as an icon lifted outside her own narrative, a French Catholic martyr turned into a chivalrous British heroine. (1995: 124–125) She can be seen as a version of the ‘mailed virgins’ that keep cropping up in Buchan’s fiction.

With Countess Catherine’s younger grandson, Philip de Laval, we enter a new world and a new age. He is possessed of a tremendous spiritual hunger which no amount of learning can assuage. He is a representative renaissance man who is on a quest of sterile knowledge. He is learned in the classics and schoolmen, a master of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, at home among the Florentine Neoplatonists, but he still feels a nameless longing for something more substantial. The old church and the New Learning are unable to provide answers to this ‘Pilgrim in the Wood of Life’. “Hovering about the borderland of human knowledge, clutching at the eternally evasive” (PK 90), he sails west, beyond ‘the Ultimate Islands’, in search of his spiritual home. His ship, a member of Columbus’s second voyage, is blown off course and makes landfall in South Carolina. A colony is established but does not survive. Though God has set aside the New World for revelation, the day is not yet, for the True Faith is yet unborn. Philip’s stock has to return to England in order for the manifest destiny of his ‘race’ to unfold. Philip the Pilgrim finds his wood though. He lives to witness the birth of the Reformed faith.

Henceforth the focus shifts to the Atlantic and the virgin land beyond, for “the old things pass away and the boundaries of the world are shifting” (PK 99). The struggle between the old faith and the new will be fought out on the other side of the Atlantic and the Continental connection can now be severed. France had stood for feudalism and chivalry and Flanders for the limited trading opportunities of the Middle Ages but the future lies with naval expansion and overseas trade. Besides, in the religious wars France is opting for the wrong religion. Symbolically Gaspard de Laval in the next episode cuts his ties with France on the night of the Massacre of St Bartholomew, to go into exile in Devon. A Huguenot with privateering experience in the Spanish Main, he joins the Elizabethan ‘sea dogs’. His son will sail as captain of Sir Walter Raleigh’s flagship the ‘Destiny’ on his last voyage to Guiana.

The Late Victorian historiography in search of imperial heroes, as B. Porter has shown, had transformed the Elizabethan adventurers and slavers, whose antics had caused some embarrassment to historians earlier in the century, into loveable ‘sea dogs’. Raleigh, the most charismatic and refined of them, joined the pantheon of great empire-builders, together with men like Clive of India or Gordon of Khartoum. The central theme of British history books at the time was the growth of liberty in England from feudal times to the present, the love of freedom being thought unique to the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ who had the duty to take it to other less fortunate nations. The benevolent nature of British expansion overseas could be most favourably contrasted with the despicable behaviour of their chief rivals, the Spaniards. While English adventurers like

Raleigh were nobly exporting the Protestant values of individual freedom, hard work, entrepreneurship and plain dealing, the Spanish kind of imperialism was shown as acquisitive, cruel, state-sponsored and exploitative. Empire was a means of spreading freedom and enlightenment beyond England's domestic boundaries, either through settlement or conquest (the latter being always forced on the English by forces resisting the march of progress) and the growth of the British Empire was shown as being less the result of a desire to conquer than being the natural consequence of the growth of the commercial spirit among people too vigorous to remain within the confines of their island home. (2004: 70–71, 241)

For Buchan, Raleigh's greatest achievement is the founding of the colony of Virginia which established the English claim on the northern half of America and gave England "better Indies than the King of Spain's", as he writes in *Sir Walter Raleigh* (126). In *The Path of the King* we are given a glimpse of the great Admiral, still magnificent but broken by misfortune, and a parable of the Hidden City, related by his Calvinist captain Jasper Lauval. The illusory nature of the quest for gold is epitomized here by the search for the city of dead kings built of gold and precious stones and hidden on a mountaintop in the jungle. An Eldorado to outdo all Eldorados, is it not a city of life but of death. The true Heavenly City will be attained through a different quest to the New World. Unknowingly, as his captain tells him, Raleigh has left his nation a greater legacy than any treasure – a new land where his race can multiply and build a new Protestant nation. Raleigh also appealed to Buchan as a visionary and political thinker. Having argued that the king's only prerogative was to be the guardian of the law, Raleigh could be viewed as a proto-democrat who was "the first of those who stood for the liberties of England" (WR 73).

These liberties are the central topic in the next episode. Mr Nicholas Loyal, Cromwell's trusted friend and adviser weighs the merits and demerits of trying the King. A careful lawyer, he has advised against it on the grounds that it would not be lawful, will end in the death of the King, which will in turn antagonize the population of England and make a martyr out of a worthless fool. Yet on consideration he starts to see the merit of striking a blow against the claims of blood and prerogative:

Kingship for him had no sanctity save in so far as it was truly kingly. Were honest folk to be harried because of the whims of a man whose remote ancestor had been a fortunate bandit? Charles had time and again broke faith with his people and soaked the land in blood. In law he could do no wrong, but, unless God slept, punishment should follow crime, and if the law gave no aid the law must be dispensed with. Man was not made for it, but it for man. (PK 151)

Should the King lose his head, the outcome will be a long, sullen struggle and the regicides would fall in the end. But there would be one gain:

They would have struck a blow against privilege which would never be forgotten. In future all kings would walk warily. In time the plain man might come to his own. In the long run was not this politic? /.../ To destroy the false kingship would open the way for the true. He was no leveller, he believed in kings who were kings in deed. The world could not do without its leaders. Oliver was such a one, and others would rise up. Why reverence a brocaded puppet larded by a priest with oil, when there were men who needed no robes or sacrificing to make them kingly. Teach the Lord's Anointed his mortality, and there would be hope in the years to come of a true anointing. (PK 151–152)

Cromwell had been wavering, waiting for a sign from heaven. Mr. Loyal, a descendant of kings, feeling a mere instrument in the hands of Providence, takes it upon himself to give him his sign.

The republic does indeed fall and the regicide's family is plunged into misery. The next two episodes exemplify the wrong kind of service and the depths to which a man can sink, despite his noble blood. The regicide's grandson, a Tory spy with the Whigs, gets entangled in the 'Popish Plot' of 1678 and is murdered by the conspirators. His son, a soldier of fortune who sells his services to the first bidder, is brought to the realization of his pitiful state by a group of noble-born Scottish Jacobites. He recognizes the need to make a fresh start and in the next episode we find his descendants in the New World.

When the Late Victorians thought about their empire, they tended to be selective. The British rule of India, which was undeniable autocratic, did not fit well into the discourse of expanding freedom, neither did the scramble in tropical Africa and Asia for territories not conducive to European settlement. The white colonies of 'settlement', on the other hand, did not pose such major moral dilemmas and were thus viewed more favourably. The United States of America had rejected the dominion of the mother country and this was towards the end of the century increasingly seen as a tragic event. Nevertheless, it could be still included in the great Anglo-Saxon brotherhood and was frequently classed together with the remaining white colonies as an inspiring example of what the spirit of rugged individualism and love of freedom could accomplish. (Porter 2004: 112–113) A passage from J. R. Green's *Short History* from 1874 puts the contemporary view in a nutshell:

From the moment of the Declaration of Independence it mattered little whether England counted for less or more with the nations around her. She was no longer a mere European power, no longer a mere rival of Germany or Russia or France. She was from that hour the mother of nations. In America she had begotten a great people, and her emigrant ships were still to carry on the movement of the Teutonic race from which she herself had sprung. Her work was to be colonisation. Her settlers were to dispute Africa with the Kaffir and the Hottentot, to wrest New Zealand from the Maori, to sow on the shores of Australia the seeds of great nations. And to these nations she was to give not only her blood and her speech, but the freedom which she had won. It is the

thought of this which flings its grandeur round the pettiest details of our story in the past ... England is only a small part of the outcome of English history. Its greater issues lie not within the narrow limits of the mother island, but in the destinies of nations yet to be. (Quoted in Porter 2004: 81–82)

Nobility resurfaces in Jim Lovelle, a mighty hunter making lone forays into the still unopened American West. We encounter him in Kentucky when it is still in its primeval state but already explored by small reconnaissance parties from the East. He is the archetypal pioneer who blazes the trail for his people, a prophet who leads them to the promised land and a visionary who prophesies their future glory. He forms the link between the savage darkness of the land and its imminent redemption by what he is and does. He unites in his person the classical heritage of the Old World and the bold individualism of the New. His skilful handling of the Indians and the respect his superior qualities command from them justifies his ‘race’s’ take-over of their lands. His eventual burning at the stake by savages, powerfully evocative in its imagery of Protestant martyrdom, can be seen as presaging the ultimate victory of the True Faith in the land.

The last two episodes are concerned with Abraham Lincoln and bring the story to its triumphant climax. All the book’s fictional seekers through ages who have been looking for a nameless ideal have been but forerunners of the Great Emancipator.

We are given seven glimpses of Lincoln, each illustrating an aspect of his great achievement. We first see him as a child in the backwoods of Indiana, then as a young lawyer in Springfield about to embark on his political career, then at the moment when he decides in favour of forcing the issue of union with the Southern states, then after the Federal defeat at Chancellorsville when the outcome of the Civil War hangs in the balance and in the last two episodes we witness his assassination and death.

Buchan’s treatment of Lincoln is traditional and mythic. All the salient features of his character and career have been scrupulously illustrated, as have the various aspects of Lincoln the Legend. His inauspicious beginnings and frontier savvy, combined with his fine turn of mind and self-taught eloquence, make him a nature’s gentleman, the Old Abe. His moral courage, firmness of purpose and unflinching regard for truth no matter how unpalatable are aspects of the Honest Abe. His resolution, calm determination in the face of danger, intense patriotism and no shirking of responsibility are qualities of a hero to be worshipped, while his good humour, acute sensibility and wide generosity make him the most humane of men. His Christ-like death on a Good Friday sanctified his life and achievement and confirmed for many the view Lincoln himself had held that he had been in all his actions a mere instrument of God, “a pipe for Omnipotence to sound through” (PK 236). But above all his appeal for Buchan and others has rested on Lincoln’s qualities as a statesman. As the saviour of the union and emancipator of the slaves he epitomizes the ideal of public service.

The nature of serving a democratic state, which is for Buchan the highest form of service, is first tackled in the Springfield episode where we see Lincoln arguing the need to change the constitution to settle the slavery issue. We next see him taking upon himself the lone responsibility for starting the Civil War to prevent democracy becoming a laughing-stock through the actions of a seceding minority. The odds are heavily against him, not least because of his own position as a disliked minority president who lacks military experience. Nevertheless he decides to pursue the policy of war because, having been elected president by the people, he cannot shirk his duty of serving the state in their best interest. His courage in the face of adversity is manifest in the Chancellorsville episode when after his forces have been crushed by the Confederates he has to decide whether to resign or carry on the struggle. He takes all the blame for the failure but refuses to quit his post for that would amount to the betrayal of his country. Lincoln emerges as the archetype of selfless public service of the truly aristocratic kind when doing one's duty can also be perceived as a spiritual quest for the ultimate truth.

The last word on kingship in the age of the triumph of the average man comes, very appropriately, from an aristocratic Englishman in his double role as a representative of the vanishing Old World of inherited privilege and the country that was the cradle of the modern representative government. A rather cynical British diplomat, who is a habitué of the courts of princes, he is shaken out of his complacency by the sincerity of the grief he sees around him at Lincoln's funeral. He suddenly realizes that the first of the democratic heroes was the last of the kings of the kind the world will never see again.

While aristocracies of the blood fade away, the future for Buchan lies with the aristocracy of the spirit. Addressing young Canadians as Governor-General toward the end of his life, he had this to say:

So I conclude with a paradox which I believe to be true, that democracy will only succeed if it becomes an aristocracy, in the classical sense of the word, where the rule of the Many is also the rule of the Best. I am speaking to young men and women on the threshold of life, and I offer you this maxim. It is the duty of all of you to be aristocrats. Of the aristocrat I know only one adequate definition. He is the man who gives to the world more than he takes from it. (Brockington 1948: 272)

Jean, Sieur de Rohaine (*Sir Quixote of the Moors*)

It is tempting to read Buchan's first novel, *Sir Quixote of the Moors*, first published in 1895, in the light of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. This romance of Victorian knight errantry, set in Scotland in the seventeenth century, allows itself to be interpreted as a moral fable of the Tennysonian kind, its three principal characters forming a love triangle closely akin to that of Arthur,

Guinevere and Lancelot of the *Idylls*. It is a journey of the principal protagonist through the moral waste land of worldliness to regeneration through love and self-denial which culminates with an agonizing victory of Soul over Sense. The Tennysonian echoes may have been subconscious, a legacy of an upbringing in a household which reverberated with poetry and song, but the ostensible aim of writing the book, which Buchan himself put forth in the year of the book's publication, in *Good Reading about Many Books*, reinforces the impression, in addition to pointing to another glaring feature of the book, the romantic mirroring of the protagonists spiritual journey to self-realization by the vagaries of the Scottish weather:

For long I had been trying to write some story which should embody to my own mind the character of the landscape, as I conceived it. The human counterpart which was most in keeping seemed to me to be that type of man whose life is guided by the conception of honour. /.../ So I set about writing a tale which should be a study of temptation and victory set against the grim background of the moor. /.../ It is in the first intention an effort to show what would be the course of a certain type of character in certain difficult circumstances, and in the second, an attempt, honest, if indifferently successful, to trace the influence of scene and weather on the action and nature of man. (Quoted in Adam Smith 1965: 90)

The novel opens indeed with a scene in the storm-tossed hills of Galloway. A Frenchman, Jean, Sieur de Rohaine, is found forlornly wandering, without clear aim or purpose, in a landscape which closely matches the desolation of his spirit, "a barren and accursed desert" (SQM 10) of a country which is foreign to him and the strange mores of which he finds difficult to comprehend. The brief synopsis of his past reveals a character whose pursuit of sensual pleasure has whittled away his fortune in his native country of Touraine and who has come to Scotland with the mercantile motive of bettering his condition in the household of his Scottish friend, Quentin Kennedy. He finds Kennedy's household as unregenerate as his home and he embraces his usual round of sporting, drinking and feasting with renewed vigour.

Yet in the midst of this riot and hilarity of untrammelled senses we become aware of the first inkling that our protagonist might be a questing knight in the making. His horse, called Saladin because of a certain Turkishness about his face, and from Normandy too, straight away brings to mind the crusaders in the Outremer, exiles in a hostile land like Jean in Scotland, on a quest for personal salvation. Kennedy's court is a nobleman's but it is not chivalrous. Very soon the parochial uncouthness of his boon companions starts to grate on Jean's nerves who has travelled and seen the world. His host, whom he remembers as "a man of courage and breeding" (SQM 14), has through excessive fondness for the pleasures of the flesh come down in the world and degenerated into a boor and a sot. Being a soldier, his task is to rout the Covenanters hiding in the hills and Jean hopes that some timely martial activity, more fitting to a nobleman

than hard drinking and idleness, might redeem them yet. But it turns out to be not real work in Carlylean terms, a fair fight with equal opponents which might ennoble the fighter, but a barbarous butchering of unarmed peasants and helpless women and children. Jean comes to loathe the ungentlemanly nature of such work and as he has, differently from his new companions, not entirely lost his sense of honour, he decides to leave Kennedy's court, thoroughly outraged at having been offered money for his services. His awakening conscience forces him to leave the security of Kennedy's household behind and embark on a quest into the unknown in both the literal and metaphorical senses, his aimless wanderings in the Galloway hills leading to trials and battles much more serious than he had experienced as a soldier wielding the weapons of war.

The landscape through which he rides, though it is only August, "the month of harvest and fruit-time" (SQM 19), seems to him barren like winter and the storm of bitterness raging in his soul at having been betrayed by a friend is mirrored by the chilling rain and wind outside which tears his clothes to shreds and splatters him with mud, thus removing the last vestiges of his worldly pride. His flimsy clothes, more suited to the pampered delights of the court, are indeed as fragile as his spiritual defences in the upcoming struggle to make his soul. Feeling abandoned and lost in this "the most uncharitable land on earth" (SQM 20), cheated out of the "sunny vineyards" and "rich orchards" of his more charitable youth, he has come to the crossroads of his life, directionless and purposeless: "I was making for the end of the earth, caring little in what direction, weary and sick of heart, with sharp anger at the past and never a hope for the morrow." (SQM 21) Yet in his darkest hour, when the night closes in like "the Day of Doom" (SQM 24), hope is at hand, for the dreary wailing of moor birds brings to his mind the little church in his native village and the desolate black marsh he unwittingly traverses in search of shelter turns out to be a holy place where once a local man of God had preached a blazing sermon on Jacob's Ladder joining together heaven and earth. But he is not as yet ready to turn his mind to higher matters and the demands of the flesh for warmth and sustenance all but obliterate the inn-keeper's rebuke. "Young man," he tells him,

you are one who loves the meat that perisheth rather than the unsearchable riches of God's grace. O, be warned while yet there is time. You know not the delights of gladsome communion wi' Him, which makes the moss-hags and heather-busses more fair than the roses of Sharon or the balmy plains of Gilead. O, be wise and turn, for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation! (SQM 31)

Punishment for unheeding the advice follows quickly. Not paying proper attention to the shifty behaviour of the landlord, Jean gorges himself with food and drink and entertains false illusions of safety, which are rudely dissipated by his realization that he is going to be robbed and killed by the inn-keeper's associates. His resolution to die with honour though is rewarded by a

miraculous escape, for his quest in the waste land is to continue and lead him to a wayside mansion where his proper trial is to take place. Passing through a landscape of physical horrors, sick in body and mind, he is saved at the end of his tether by a prayer. A gleam of light appears in the pitch dark of the night and leads him to a house of illusion and temptation where he is to make his soul.

At first, the contrast between outside and inside could not seem greater. From utter darkness of the deepest night of the soul, he steps into bright sunlight which seems to flood the house when he wakes up in the morning and discovers himself to be ministered to by a angel of a girl, her face and hair aglow in the sunlight like Madonna's. His ragged clothes, the symbol of his former frivolous life, are removed and he dons a humble country suit provided by his hosts. It is sturdy and warm but unpretentious, like the household that he now enters. The house turns out to be a manse, presided over by a Covenanting minister whose daughter Anne and future son-in-law keep him company. To Jean's words of thanks for his kindness, which has brought him out of a desert of darkness into a place of light, the old man replies with prophetic words: "What saith the wise man? 'He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls'" and we know that Jean's true quest has only just begun.

Anne's betrothed, a strapping young man called Master Henry Semple of Clachlands, is a neighbouring laird and also a staunch Covenanter who has been ousted from his home by a troop of dragoons sent to the area to seek out the Covenanters secretly convening in the hills. Despite warm friendship developing between the two younger men, Jean is slightly put off by the divisive religious fanaticism of the men of the household and carefully delineates his own moderate and conciliatory position in religious matters which will become the hallmark of all Buchan's heroes. He is particularly struck by the dual nature of Master Henry whose tender and very obvious passion for Anne is coupled with harsh severity with which he reprimands the girl for the slightest show of levity on her part. Gradually the Sabbath-like solemnity of the atmosphere reigning in the house starts to erode Jean's initial impression of warmth and gaiety and he comes to resent its oppressive effect, especially on Anne.

She has from the first looked different from the other members of the household. While her men folk live only for the world to come, she gradually reveals herself as an earthy woman capable of joy and passion. That the demure girl is a potential temptress, and thus dangerous to Jean's peace of mind, is hinted at by the first supper she serves in Jean's presence which the latter likens in his mind to Eve's apple in the Garden of Eden. This first impression is not allowed to linger, for the meal is followed by evening prayer, to which she solemnly attends. Trouble seriously develops when word is brought by a neighbour that a warrant of arrest has been issued against the minister and Master Henry, for both have attended the secret prayer meetings of the

Covenanters. They decide to take to the hills and leave Anne and the household under the protection of their guest.

It is at this stage that the book takes on strong Tennysonian overtones in the treatment of the emerging love triangle, for certain concerns and reactions of the principal character forcefully bring to mind the plight of the most popular of the mature Victorian Arthurian heroes, that of Lancelot, a man torn between his loyalty to his friend and host and his passion for the latter's wife, which ultimately made him betray that trust and leave Arthur's court in great mental anguish. As D. Mancoff has shown, no hero of Tennyson's *Idylls* troubled the Victorians more than Lancelot. A most accomplished knight, in every way Arthur's equal in prowess and courage, the most loyal of knights who embraced Arthur's cause as his own, a foreigner who became the King's most trusted friend, a man of virtue who was racked by his guilty love for the Queen and almost desecrated the sanctity of Arthur's home but drew back just in time not to betray his friend completely and spared his life in the battlefield when the King was fully at his mercy, Lancelot of all the Round Table heroes most starkly embodied Sense at war with Soul. Outwardly a model of restraint who never transgressed the permissible boundaries of chivalric duty, inwardly he was tormented by his guilty passion which paralyzes him as he became more and more engrossed by his own sin. If Arthur was devised by Tennyson as ideal manhood closed in real man, the character of Lancelot served to illustrate real manhood closed in ideal man whose self-abnegation and torment of the soul found many sympathetic interpreters among Victorian artists and writers. (1995: 66–71)

That Anne could be Guinevere to Jean's Lancelot can be deduced from little pointers in the text early on. In a country of boors and yokels who elicit only contempt from the sophisticated Frenchman, the girl, from the moment Jean sets eyes on her, stands out as having "no semblance of rusticity in her fair features" (SQM 70). Instead, her figure and movements have singular grace, her bearing is serious and dignified beyond her years and her eyes are positively "imperial" (ibid.). Unlike her father and lover, who have no gaiety or sprightliness in them and dwell in habitual gloom, Jean detects "odd sparkles of gaiety in her eyes and the corners of her rosy mouth" (ibid.) Her joyous and sensual nature has clearly been overlooked by her lover, whose stern moral rebukes and high-minded dedication to his duty to God forcibly bring to mind Tennyson's Arthur in his most exalted moods, especially when matters concern his Queen. Arthur always put duty first and expected to be loved for his moral high-mindedness, little regarding the Queen's feelings and never displaying emotion for her in public. It is striking that when news is brought of their impending arrest, the old minister's first thought is for his daughter but Henry's only concern is his private salvation. "[T]is a time for us a' to be on our knees," he cries.

But ha'e courage, and dinna let us spoil the guid cause by our weak mortal complaining. Is't no' better to be hunkering in a moss-hole and communing with the Lord than waxing fat like Jeshurun in carnal corruption? Call on God's name, but no' wi' sighing, but wi' exaltation, for He hath bidden us to a mighty heritage. (SQM 83)

He has completely forgotten about Anne. He never considers staying behind and facing the soldiers to protect his betrothed. Instead, he asks his now trusted friend Jean to look after his future wife and flees the house. Jean's predicament closely mirrors Lancelot's when the latter was sent by Arthur to escort his bride from her father's house to Camelot. It was on this romantic journey through blossoming spring landscape that the two fell in love, to their eternal misery. A similar journey awaits Anne and Jean.

Before love blossoms Jean is given a chance to prove that he is a man of honour. When the soldiers come to arrest the fugitives and their Captain behaves with great insolence towards Anne, Jean can step in as her champion and, drawing his sword, in single combat defeats the man who has dared to maltreat a lady. His parting words to the unchivalrous scoundrel are worthy of any hero of romance: "Follow your sword, and learn two things before you come back – civility to maids and the rudiments of swordplay." (SQM 94)

What follows for the inhabitants of the house transforms the autumnal landscape of the bleak Scottish moors for them into a blazing riot of spring. It is, of course, false spring, as both the season and the love affair head inexorably towards the winter of death. But while love blossoms, the landscape around them mirrors their growing joy in each other, sunrises of crimson and gold and days warm and bright lulling them into a false sense of security. Especially Jean, who should know better, being an experienced man of the world, in a misguided effort to cheer the girl up, entertains her with tales of romance and adventure, so that the lovers move through the landscape of love like Lancelot and Guinevere

Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd)
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
(“Guinevere”, ll. 386–389)

Indeed, no sin is as yet dreamed but Jean, tormented by his growing desire, finds it ever more difficult to cope with his feelings and adhere strictly to his duty of protecting Anne. His predicament in Victorian and chivalric terms is really becoming intolerable. He has given his word of honour to his friend and host to protect a maiden entrusted to his care against all comers but finds the greatest danger to her posed by his own desire. Should he yield to it, he would break his oath and lose his honour. In Victorian Evangelical terms his situation is even worse. He would desecrate his host's home, the only place in the world

where true Christian values could and should be upheld, in defiance of the worldly corruption of the flesh reigning outside. In terms of personal salvation, a Christian's life should be a moral crusade against his own base desires and a true soldier of Christ would never allow his guard to slip, for the slightest breach in his defences would ruin his chances of salvation. To overcome the forces of evil and make one's own soul, the self should be renounced and every action meticulously scrutinized, lest it should entail a possible fall from grace. So, while decorum still reigns and the lovers have progressed no further than quiet and serious talk, we find Jean racked with guilt:

I should have felt less like a St. Anthony in the desert. As it was, I had to fight with a terrible sense of responsibility and unlimited power for evil, and God knows how hard that is for any Christian to strive with. 'Twould have been no very hard thing to shut myself in a room, or bide outside all day, and never utter a word to Anne save only the most necessary; but I was touched by the girl's loneliness and sorrows, and, moreover, I conceived it to be a strange way of executing a duty, to flee from it altogether. I was there to watch over her, and I swore by the Holy Mother to keep the very letter of my oath. (SQM 101)

Jean's talk about heroic deeds in foreign lands has awakened the girl's curiosity as to the greater world outside the bounds of her home. For Victorians this would have been a dire warning, for it signalled the soul awakening to the joys of worldliness and would have brought to mind the sad fate of Tennyson's Elaine, whose awakening desire for Lancelot was accompanied by a determination to break out of the confines of her home, which she ultimately achieved only through death. That these go together in the case of Anne also becomes evident one evening when the girl, who hitherto had lived unquestioningly an extremely restricted and solitary life under her father's guidance, dedicated to household work and charitable duties to the local poor expected of the daughter of a minister, suddenly expresses her desire to see France. A decisive milestone in the relationship is reached the same evening, when having heard Anne sing a plaintive ballad about a local knight who left on an errand and never returned to her lover, which, as yet unrealized by them, foretells the end of their own romance, Jean decides to teach her some more lively French songs of love and war. The girl, who has never danced to a tune, is suddenly awakened to sensual pleasure, revealing, to Jean's astonishment, behind the decorous demeanour of a timid country mouse a spirit as passionate as that of "a caged hawk" (SQM 107). As their love grows, Jean finds it ever more difficult to grapple with his conscience, for Anne's growing sensuality makes his own position in the household ever more controversial and dangerous to them both. The fugitives in the hills are all but forgotten when Anne learns to dance, which removes final traces of reserve and fully reveals her joyous and passionate nature. The realization of what he has helped to bring about hits Jean fully in the face one evening, when he returns home one flaming evening and sees Anne through a window dancing with wanton abandon. The fire and doom of their relationship

is skilfully written into the landscape, which blazes with reds and crimsons, the setting sun making the house stand out and glow like a jewel in the slowly encroaching darkness which will soon obliterate all light. As Anne dances away, her hair and body as if aflame, borrowing their light from the fire roaring in the grate, the horrified Jean realizes that she is a fiery temptress, a true daughter of Herodias. The reward Salome in the Old Testament asked for her dance was the head of John the Baptist.

The immediate danger to Jean from Anne is the lassitude and forgetfulness which life with her induces and which has prompted D. Daniell to compare her to La Belle Dame Sans Merci (1975: 48), who in Keats's beloved version of the age-old story is a fairy who sucks the spirit out of the questing knights whom she entraps in her wasteland realm, bewitching them with her wanton eyes and nimble feet. When Jean has to go and warn the fugitives that their hiding place has been betrayed, he can only with the greatest difficulty tear himself away from the girl who embodies everything which the wilderness outside is not:

She was so white and red and golden, all light and gravity, with the shape of a princess, the mien of a goddess, and for all I knew, the heart of a dancing girl. She carried with her the air of comfort and gaiety, and the very thought of her made me shrink from the dark moors and ill-boding errand as from the leprosy. (SQM 125–126)

She has shown a coldness and indifference to his errand, as if the fates of her father and former lover no longer matter, which Jean finds deeply unsettling and predictably, when he rides out to the moors, he is suddenly back in an autumnal landscape of rotting leaves, chilling rains and the first token of winter, the sprinkling of snow, covering the black earth. When he returns to the comfort of Anne's presence, which fills the house like "a tranquil summer" (SQM 130), he finds it ever more difficult to contain his desire:

I tried to smother it hourly, when my better nature was in the ascendant, and hourly I was overthrown in the contest. I fought against terrible odds /.../ fighting that battle which all must fight some time or other in their lives and be victorious or vanquished forever. (SQM 131–132)

It is at this moment of crisis that Master Henry decides to reappear, to have one last look at his bride. His sojourn in the wilderness has turned him into a madman, but his lunatic ravings contain for Jean a bitter truth and reinforce for the reader the Arthurian associations. Accosting Jean walking and cooling his brain in the manse garden, he asks Jean to persuade Anne to show herself outside for a while, so that he might see her unseen and be gone. This accomplished, he takes leave of Jean with words which bring to mind Arthur's farewell to Guinevere, when he expresses a hope that in afterlife, when Guinevere has purified her corrupt soul and no taint of Lancelot clings to her any longer, they might again come together as husband and wife. Arthur then

takes his leave to go and meet his doom in the final battle in the west, his last act of duty on earth, and so in his own way does Master Henry, telling Jean:

I must be gone. I have seen enough. I maun away to the deserts and caves of the rocks, and it may be lang, lang ere I come back. But my love winna forget me. Na, na; the Lord hath appointed unto me that I shall sit at His right hand on the last, the great day, and she shall be by my side. (SQM 137)

Master Henry is clearly mad but Jean's word of honour, given to him while he was still sane, is an unbreakable bond, and besides, Jean has his soul to think of. With the madman's words "'twill ill befa' those in the day of judgement who eat the bread of idleness and dwell in peace in thae weary times" (SQM 133) ringing in his ears, Jean, paralyzed by guilt and remorse, retires to his bedroom, locks the door lest he should succumb to temptation, and fights out his last battle of Soul with Sense.

The arguments for the Sense are strong. The maid loves him, he cannot possibly abandon her when she needs protection most, and definitely not to the embraces of a madman. He has no prospects but with Anne's money they could elope and make a life for themselves in France, far from religious fanatics or marauding soldiers. The only barrier to their happiness together will be but "a meaningless vow and some antiquated scruples" (SQM 144). However, it is this now meaningless vow which tips the balance for Soul, for in the midst of his struggle he comes to realize that honour is his most precious possession. In an agony of doubt, when his soul hangs in the balance, he has a vision of himself living a rich and comfortable life, loving and being loved and yet being "in the very jaws of Hell" (SQM 148), for, having deceived a friend and stolen his lover, he has forsaken his right to an honourable name. Another vision, this time of his unearthly first love "with eyes like the Blessed Mother" (SQM 149) who had died young but whose image now reappears to pull him back from the brink of temptation and fall, brings with it the joy of relief that the irrevocable step has not been taken and that he can still make his soul.

With resolution comes the dawn, signalling the end of the dark night of the soul, but it is a joyless morning, misty and wet. The Soul may have won and moral regeneration may have taken place but it is only with the sternest resolve to put honour before life and love that he can flee the joys of worldliness. Donning the ragged remnants of his old clothes, now symbols of his continuing spiritual quest, he brusquely takes leave of his loved one, allowing himself only one fleshly comfort, a loaf of bread, before riding off into wind and rain.

There is a certain bitter irony in the last scene when the hero, about to remove his protection from a girl whose only crime was to have had a passionate nature which was awakened to true love through his own presence and actions, with a gravity not unlike her stern former lover, replies to her question whether he was about to take the bread to "the widows and fatherless in their affliction", people as defenceless as she herself is shortly to become:

“Nay, I would but keep myself unspotted from the world.” (SQM 154) Paradoxically, having liberated the girl from the stern Calvinism of her father and lover, the Frenchman, who had formerly considered himself a religious moderate and a true cavalier when compared to the rustic Covenanters, has, through experiencing true and courtly love, turned himself into an even more fanatical Calvinist than his hosts and is ready to flee in panic to the bogs and marshes at the mere thought of fleshly corruption. He may have saved his soul and convinced himself of having preserved his own honour, and by removing his disturbing presence also the girl’s, but he has broken his oath to protect her from other enemies than himself and unchivalrously abandoned his loved one to a fate worse than death at the hands of the soldiers quartered just on the other side of the hill. Unless she of course deserves her fate, having through innocence and ignorance failed in her struggle of Sense with Soul and been consigned in Victorian eyes to the category of the fallen. Buchan seems to hint as much by comparing Anne’s heartfelt pleas for her lover not to leave her in the final scene to the song of the Sirens who lured mariners to their death.

John Burnet of Barns (*John Burnet of Barns*)

Buchan’s second novel, *John Burnet of Barns*, is likewise set in the Scottish Borders in the 1680s like *Sir Quixote of the Moors* and is similarly a quest for self-knowledge, the hero traversing a landscape well-known to Buchan from his childhood wanderings in and around the valley of the Tweed in search of a valid creed for life. Here, too, the landscape reflects the changing moods of the protagonist, as he oscillates between his desire for scholarly retirement and soldierly action, only in more a complex and less obvious way. It also introduces, as J. Robertson has remarked, several of Buchan’s hallmark themes, like the hurried journey which sets the pace of the novel, the hero’s encounter with the “other” in the form of a society alien to him, the charming villain representing great evil and the faithful sidekick who joins the protagonist on his travels (1994: xii–xiv). The chief of these though is Buchan’s preoccupation with moderation in conduct and belief which will be the central concern of all his heroes. In this book especially his classical training shines through (he was after all only nineteen when he started writing the book and studying the classics at Oxford at the time of writing) and he shows himself a firm adherent of the Aristotelian Doctrine of the Mean as exposed in the *Ethics*. Likewise, Aristotle’s dictum about the contemplative life being conducive to supreme happiness is closely followed here, the protagonist, after a brief spell of romance, returning to the self-sufficient pleasures of a retired and scholarly life.

It is an adventure story heavily indebted to predecessors like Scott, Stevenson and Blackmore, with stylistic echoes of Charles Lamb, De Quincey and Marie Corelli (Daniell 1975: 9) and bears the stamp of a young author still

searching for his own particular style. Buchan's attempts to strike a balance between his two fascinations, with minute description of landscape and the literature of romance, have led critics who prefer to approach Buchan's fiction as basically realistic and only incidentally romantic, to dismiss apologetically the romance elements in *John Burnet of Barnes* as an unfortunate and lingering link with his predecessors, in D. Daniell's characteristic words "an irritating habit of relying on the clichés of romance" (ibid.: 19), encouraged no doubt by Buchan's own dismissive attitude to the book later, when he wrote to Gilbert Murray: "To tell the truth, I am rather ashamed of it, it is so very immature and boyish." (Quoted in Adam Smith 1965: 96) The present author would like to argue though that, far from being marginal, the "clichés" of romance are central to understanding the numerous, and from the realist point of view, rather senseless adventures and pointless challenges the protagonist meets in the book. Instead of treating the book as a rather hesitant and uneven *Bildungsroman*, which it to a certain extent surely is, it might be more intriguing to look at it as an interesting attempt by a young writer to combine his two great passions, for learning and romance, which has resulted in an interesting symbiosis of a romance of knight errantry and a study of maturation of character according to the Aristotelian ethics in a well-researched and historically authentic setting which will likewise become a Buchan trademark.

The book is framed as the memoirs of its protagonist John Burnet of Barnes, written in maturity and directed at his posterity as a moral lesson:

I am desirous that they of my family should read of my life and learn the qualities both good and bad which run in the race and so the better be able to resist evil and do the good. (JBB 3)

It opens with a fishing scene and young John (he is thirteen) contemplating the merits of an active and passive life. From the beginning he is torn in two directions, the characteristic dichotomy running through the whole book. On the one hand there is the strong pull exerted by the pastoral idyll of the homely valley of the Tweed and the life of contemplation and leisure it entails, on the other the romantic attractions of the wider world and a chance of martial glory:

[A]s I sat I thought of the lands I had read of and heard of, where it was always fiercely hot, and great fruits were to be had for the pulling. I thought of the oranges and olives and what not, and of silver and golden fishes with sparkling scales; and as I thought of them I began to loathe hazelnuts and rowans and whortleberries and the homely trout, which are all that is to be had in this land of ours. Then I thought of Barnes and my kinsfolk, and the tales of my forebears, and I loved again the old silent valley of Tweed – for a gallant tale is worth many fruits and fishes. Then as the day brightened my dreams grew accordingly. I came of a great old house, I, too, would ride to wars, to the Low Countries, to Sweden, and I would do great deeds like the men in Virgil. And then I wished I had lived in Roman times. Ah, those were the days, when all the good things of life fell to brave men, and there was no other trade to be compared to war. (JBB 6)

Unbeknownst to him his own “gallant tale” is about to begin, for he falls asleep angling and wakes up in a world which has been transformed by romance. He makes the acquaintance of a neighbouring girl, Marjory Veitch, who straight away leads him into the chivalric world of dragons and maidens to be rescued. They spend the rest of their first day together exchanging miraculous tales of adventure, gleaned from John’s reading and local folklore.

As befits a heroine of romance, Marjory is no simple country girl but of an aristocratic house with an illustrious English connection and John has an equally impressive family background. An ancient Border family with a Stewart connection, residing in a massive peel tower, the legacy of the family’s moss-trooping past, the Burnets have come down in the world since those wild and savage days when dash and bravery were enough to make or break a man. These times are now past and the first lesson John learns from contemplating diminished family fortunes is that excess leads to trouble. The lands gained by rapine and extortion, the reputation earned through rashness in the field and an undue fondness for the bottle have proved fleeting achievements. The family has sunk into poverty and it befalls to John to rectify the family’s reputation among the locals. The old feudal ideal of manly behaviour no longer produces desired results, as is exemplified by the character of Gilbert, John’s cousin and the villain of the book. Gilbert has been created as John’s antithesis in every way and illustrates values which are rapidly becoming redundant in the new, enlightened age which lays a new stress on learning. Gilbert is the quintessential soldier of the old, moss-trooping kind, a Hercules of a man full of dash and courage but, though conventionally educated, he lacks the new 17th-century virtue of *virtù*, a refined sensibility which only the deliberate cultivation of the mind and senses can produce. He boasts and brags, is uncivil to his hosts and servants, disrespectful of women and fond of underhand dealings. Though dazzled by Gilbert’s outward lustre, John early comes to prefer the company of a relative of a different sort, a divinity professor and well-known historian. True to the new ideal of the times, John will combine in his person the virtues of both the active and the contemplative life. The decisive trait which will set John apart from his cousin and make him a man for the new times is his intellectual curiosity in a century which saw the emergence of the virtuosos.

John’s training at home consists of manly sports and heroic literature, both classical and chivalric. At eighteen his progress in polite learning is so advanced that he can be sent to Glasgow University where his intellectual appetite is fuelled by disputations between the schoolmen and the new philosophers. He goes through a passionate fit of Platonism, followed by a fervent enthusiasm for Aristotle whom he views

as having reached the height of human wisdom, for his method is so all-embracing and satisfying that it breeds wonder in the heart of any man, and it affords so sure a bottom for thought that men perforce become Aristotelians. (JBB 28)

He then discovers natural philosophy but, somewhat dissatisfied with their preoccupations, finally sets his heart on Descartes. Having thus assiduously mastered the whole scope of dialectic and philosophy, John has unwittingly immersed himself so deeply in the studious life that he has completely neglected martial training. Having been an excellent sportsman at home, the excessive devotion to books has made him idle and prone to unmanly displays of temper. By having striven to live a life of pure contemplation, he has erred on the side of monkishness and neglected his honour:

I thought that my spirit was chastened to a fit degree, and so no doubt it was, for those who had feared me at first on account of my fist and straightforward ways, now openly scoffed at me without fear of punishment. Indeed, one went so far one day as to jostle me off the causeway, and I made no return, but went on as if nothing had happened, deeming it beneath a wise man to be distracted by mundane trifles. Yet, mind you, in all this there was nothing Christian or like unto the meekness of our Master, as I have seen in some men; but rather an absurd attempt to imitate those who would have lived very differently had their lot been cast in our hot and turbid days. (JBB 29)

He is saved from this life of unseemly and pretentious meekness by the sight of Gilbert's progress through the streets of Glasgow at the head of a gallant troop of horse. John, not yet schooled in moderation, goes through a violent change of heart and determines there and then to exchange the anonymous life of a scholar for that of a soldier and gentleman and bring glory to his ancient house in the field. His first act of newfound manhood is to beat up a lad who had jostled him in the street. His second is to buy a sword and exchange his sober attire for a suit befitting his new station as a cavalier.

When John leaves industrious Glasgow behind and embraces the new life of a gallant, the romance elements in the book become much more pronounced. He rides home through a glorious spring landscape like some knight errant of romance, singing merry songs and flinging coins to the little children, the blossoming orchards showering their bounty on him and his horse as he passes beneath, covering them with "a mail of pink and white" (JBB 31). His arrival at home though is marred by Gilbert's presence. Their first altercation upon John's arrival identifies them as being on the opposite sides of the great divide which opened up between old and new types of chivalry after the reform of taste in the seventeenth century. Boisterous display gave way to reserve in manners and dress which John beautifully exemplifies by refusing to rise to Gilbert's taunts about his studies and Marjorie not to excite his ailing father. To Gilbert's claim that "your fine gentleman must have his horses and servants, and dress himself like his quality for all the maids to stare at, and have plenty of loose silver to fling to the gaping crowd; and he is a poor fellow indeed if he do not eat and drink the best that each tavern can give", he gently replies that "gentrice did not consist in daintiness of eating and drinking or boisterous display" and that "nothing gave so fine a flavour to gentility as a tincture of letters" (JBB 35).

John also learns with alarm that his beloved Marjorie, whom he has been silently worshipping from afar now that she has grown into a beautiful young woman, has been spotted by Gilbert also and that he is planning to secure the girl's affection in defiance of his own feelings. Gilbert's intrusive presence and especially his taunts questioning his prowess as a sportsman and a lover lead to their first trial of strength, John challenging the older man to a horse race across a difficult terrain which he chivalrously chooses as being unfamiliar to them both in order not to have an unfair advantage over his opponent on his own home ground. He wins the race but his courtesy and generosity to his humiliated opponent is not appreciated and his offer of friendship is rejected with scorn.

Now that amity between kinsmen is no longer possible due to Gilbert's recalcitrance, John hastens to secure Marjory's affection, fearing Gilbert's designs on her. In his courtship John is an earnest Victorian. Buchan as a writer is notable for the awkwardness of the love relationships of his characters. They seem to lack the required subtlety of treatment and as a result, fail to convince. The present author would like to argue that, whatever their modern psychological credibility, in the context of Victorian chivalry and woman worship courtships like John's make very much sense. As a lover John can be located firmly in the tradition of chivalry after Kingsley and Hughes. Under the label Muscular Christianity they had advocated manly behaviour which was frank, open, straightforward in conduct and speech and which treated love as a spiritual and chaste experience leading firmly to marriage. Feeling secure about Marjory's feelings for himself after years of easy camaraderie between them, John decides to formalize their relationship as soon as possible, to prevent Gilbert's rival claim. He approaches the matter bluntly and gauchely, for as he believes, "[t]he shortest and plainest way is still the best in love as in all things" (JBB 44). Though the girl makes a few attempts at gallant coquetry, this artfulness is lost on John who objects to any show of levity in matters of the heart with a truly Victorian severity. This puts him in a different league from Gilbert whose easy gallantry and loose talk about women, when the matter is brought up between the cousins, is an indication of a much deeper malaise and as the book unfolds and his smooth façade is ripped away, Gilbert stands revealed as guilty of one of the gravest offences against the spirit of chivalry – dishonourable conduct towards women. But John also has a lot to learn about love and himself as a lover. His experience of life has so far been restricted to book-learning and this has induced in him a sense of false maturity. He speaks confidently about entering "from carefree youth into the dim region of manhood" (JBB 45) but this realm of experience is indeed as yet "dim" for him for he neither knows his own mind nor heart. His quest for self-knowledge is still ahead of him and in the course of it he will know the meaning of passionate love and hate. Though he professes to love Marjory dearly, his feelings at this stage are only lukewarm and immature, for he dismisses jealousy as a meaningless concept and is careful not to bind himself too strongly, reserving

for himself the unlimited freedom to go and see the world, for as he tells his father: "I am young yet and a boy's road is a long road." (JBB 46)

The onset of responsible manhood is forced on John sooner than he expects and the cause is Gilbert's levity. When Gilbert, in jealousy, casts doubts on Marjory's chastity, John's earnest nature is deeply offended:

Now my cousin and I were of such opposite natures that I took most things seriously, while he found matter for a jest in all – yet not in full good-nature, but with a touch of satire. (JBB 47)

When Gilbert descends to downright rudeness, considerations of kinship and hospitality pale in the face of the enormity of Gilbert's transgression against the rules of gentility and he is thrown out of the house by his uncle. To have to disown a brother's son aggrieves the old man so that he passes away a few days later, making Gilbert the direct cause of his death and furnishing John with his first serious grievance against his cousin, "mere boyish rivalry" (JBB 48) between them turning overnight into reasoned hatred.

The life of a country squire, tending to the land and relieving tedium with field sports quickly becomes boring to John whose spirit yearns for adventure. The opportunity to go and see the wider world presents itself when Marjory's soldiering brother returns home and thus relieves John of the obligation to extend his protection over Marjory. Instead of going to the wars as he had fondly imagined himself doing, John follows his scholarly inclinations and opts for two years of study at the University of Leyden. His goodbye to Marjory is rather perfunctory and though they have shared all sorts of adventures together as children, John is adamant that this time it would be his adventure alone. Mature Marjory's life is to be firmly confined to the domestic sphere, on the rather ludicrous grounds that sailing in a ship and visiting foreign towns might scare the former tomboy. Marjory's objection that she would be content to be wherever John is, is countered by the inconsequential: "But, Marjory, lass, you would not like me to stay at home, when the world is so wide, and so many brave things to be seen." (JBB 58) Having been reminded of her place, Marjory meekly acquiesces to wait at home until her gallant cavalier returns full of fine tales of brave deeds. John in his immoderate haste to leave is even prepared to overlook the warning signs of lack of moderation in the man to whose care he entrusts his beloved. Though charming and dashing, Marjory's brother is overly fond of drink and his behaviour is far from regular. Rashness in decision and conduct will turn out to be the character trait most in need of correction as John embarks on his quest. "You are not a steadfast man," Marjory perspicaciously tells him and indeed John leaves her not entirely sure of whether what he is doing is right:

For the vexed question came to disturb me, whether it was not mere self-gratification on my side thus to travel, and whether my more honourable place was not at home. (JBB 60)

John's life at Leyden is placid but the staidness is outweighed by the company of the learned minds and disputations on the latest trends in philosophy, so that he again becomes completely immersed in the contemplative life. Once again he is rudely brought back to earth from the realms of philosophy by encountering Gilbert at a moment when the life of letters is on the point of engulfing him. At a society dinner where both are guests Gilbert who serves in the Scots brigade in Holland reveals himself as a braggart and womanizer, which angers John whose own love for Marjory is pure. Gilbert's disrespectful behaviour to his host's daughter at the dinner table and especially some vulgar jokes at the expense of women coated in seemingly decent Latin which Gilbert addresses to the girl, provoke a hot response from John who, having held himself in check from considerations of kinship and a lingering admiration for Gilbert's noble qualities, can no longer control his anger and throws a glass of wine in Gilbert's face. His cousin's easy mastery in gallant courtship, though tinged with vulgarity, has awakened in John "the first dawns of jealousy" (JBB 93) and the girl's discomfiture at Gilbert's hands, reminiscent of chaste Marjory, raise a great storm of passion in his heart "against any one who would dare thus to put a woman to shame" (JBB 93). Ashamed of his own rash behaviour, he is ready to settle the matter in a fair fight between gentlemen but does not get it. Swallowing his anger and biding his time Gilbert organizes an ambush of his men to attack him on the road home. Saved from the worst by the perspicacity of his servant, whom in his noble-minded naivety he had derided for suspecting another nobleman of ill designs, John is at this stage still inexperienced and trusting enough not to suspect another man of birth of underhand dealings.

The cousins settle their differences in the age-old chivalric tradition of single combat by fighting a duel in the college garden, for John would never suffer "an insult to a lady to pass unregarded" (JBB 105). Before they cross swords, John makes the noble gesture of apologizing for his rash behaviour which is accepted. Their fight is initially very even for, despite recognizing Gilbert as his antithesis in every way, there is no hatred as yet in the struggle on John's part and he still thinks highly of his cousin. This admiration is not shared by his opponent who, being more skilled at swordplay, grows scornful and triumphant as he perceives the other's weakening resolution. It is only a taunting reference to Marjory from Gilbert's lips that revives John's flagging spirit and brings about Gilbert's crushing defeat. Elated with victory and cocksure in his ignorance of the ways of the world, John does not pay proper attention to the menace in Gilbert's parting words and while away a whole year in Holland, although he has learnt that Gilbert has headed back for Scotland after his public humiliation at his hands. He also, rather unthinkingly, gets embroiled in the intrigues of the Covenanters abroad by forwarding their correspondence to Scotland under his own name.

The romance elements in the book become especially pronounced after John returns home from abroad. That a more adventurous part of his life, and the book, is to begin is, in a way, heralded by a little private indulgence on Buchan's part. Before John leaves Leyden, he makes the acquaintance of one M. de Rohaine, whom the reader will remember as the protagonist of *Sir Quixote of the Moors*, who lives in great poverty in one of the mean side streets and is steeped in melancholy, having recently returned from Scotland. Besides teaching John some new tricks with the sword, the Frenchman regales him with strange tales of his adventures in Scotland which serve to prepare him, and the reader, for John's equally strange adventures in his native country which are about to begin.

He is summoned home by a maiden in distress. Marjory's cryptic message about being in danger puts an end to John's life as a scholar. His sorrow at leaving the quiet life is outweighed though by a joyous anticipation. Torn between the attractions of passive and active life, John foreshadows many a Buchan hero with a similar affliction and forcibly brings to mind the author's own dual career as a writer and man of affairs:

Indeed, I was born between two stools; for, while I could never be content to stay at home and spend my days among books, on the other hand the life of unlettered action was repugnant. Had it been possible, I should have gladly dwelt among wars and tumults with men who cared not for these things alone, and could return, when all violence was at an end, to books and study with a cheerful heart. But no man has the making of the world, and he must even fit himself to it as he finds it. Nor do I think it altogether evil to have many desires and even many regrets, for it keeps a man's spirit active, and urges him on to valiant effort. Of this I am sure, that contentment is the meanest of the virtues. (JBB 123)

His first task on arrival in Scotland is to save his lady from peril. That the source of this peril is his neglected cousin Gilbert becomes clear on landing, for Gilbert has secured a warrant for his arrest on the grounds of John having conspired with the Covenanters abroad. He has also inveigled himself into the company of Marjory's dissolute brother and has been pestering the girl with his unwelcome advances. With John's return to his native Tweeddale in and around which his adventures take place, we enter a land of pure romance which, despite being firmly anchored in the physical reality of the landscape, nevertheless is full of miracles. These start the moment he embarks on his journey to rescue Marjory. In the stable of his inn he discovers his loyal old steed Maisie on whose back he makes the escape from his captors. On his way he meets a mysterious stranger who out of the goodness of his heart furthers his quest by furnishing him with a couple of pistols and a few pieces of good advice. There is a skirmish with his pursuers, the equivalent of a true chivalric *melée* (or *mellay*, as Buchan calls it), and then the classical pursuit, a trial of speed and skill in horsemanship, the occasion to which Maisie rises magnificently. There is the loyal old retainer who gives shelter to the young lord and leads the

pursuers up the wrong track. There is the joyous reunion of the lovers and then a romantic moonlit journey through sublime landscape, “a fantastic fairyland” (JBB 157) at the very heart of the bleak and inaccessible moors of the Tweed, to take the rescued lady to a place of safety at the castle of her elderly male relative. There is a brief sojourn in a cave among the outlawed Covenanters, a potentially hostile encounter with the unknown which turns out to be a friendly one with a wise old man, the equivalent of the hermit in older romances, who dispenses sage counsel to questing knights, having himself been a soldier, and his young followers, true crusading knights who have followed him into the wilderness to uphold True Faith. While the meeting with the Covenanters serves to highlight John’s emphatically moderate position in matters concerning religion, Buchan also takes great care to put forth the Covenanters’ position in a sympathetic and favourable light, which is all the more commendable since, according to K. M. Brown (2002: 267), the Scots have generally preferred to draw their cultural iconography from other periods and have, out of embarrassment over distant religious squabbles, tended to overlook the heroic figures of these “killing times”.

Then there is the otherwise inexplicable scene when Marjory, unsuspected as yet of any connection with the Covenanters, is wounded while she is taking a quiet walk by the burnside outside the cave by a soldier riding past who does not even slow down but, shouting obscenities, idly fires his carbine at her. The incident’s only function seems to be to reveal to John the depth of his feelings for Marjory and provide him with another opportunity for chivalrous action. This takes the form of the ritual humiliation of the guilty soldier and his friend, John and his servant, having caught up with them, forcing them to strip and subject themselves to being beaten by Nicol with the flat of John’s sword. Though chivalrous, John’s action is foolish in the extreme, for not only has he now betrayed his identity and whereabouts to his deadliest enemy, he has also imperilled his lady whom he has vowed to protect. His rashness and unthinking bravado have yet again overmastered his good judgement and he needs to be taught a lesson, or as Marjory’s uncle puts it when John has delivered her to his castle and is ready to take to the hills:

There’s naught better for a young man than to find out how little the world cares whether he be dead or alive. And, above all, you that pretend to be a scholar, it will ding some of the finespun fancies out of your head. (JBB 181)

This is seconded by John’s own admission:

In truth I much needed the rough lessons of hardship and penury, for at that time I was puffed up in a self-conceit and a certain pride of letters as foolish as it was baseless. (JBB 182)

John spends the rest of the spring and summer hiding from his cousin’s dragoons in the hills of Tweeddale, alternately keeping an eye on his estate, now taken over by his cousin, and revelling in the freedom of an outdoor life.

Periods of idle contemplation in the heather in some remote part of the glen are punctuated by bursts of romantic activity, like the adventure that befalls him on his very first day in the hills and which might have stepped out of any medieval romance of knight errantry, namely the challenge, issued on the wayside by an anonymous stranger, to cross swords in single combat just for the pleasure of it. In John's case this is an unidentified nobleman of good breeding and rich attire, who just materializes in front of him and begs him to draw his sword, for he has been thirsting for days for a chance to test his prowess with a worthy opponent. Without further ado they cross swords and after a few minutes of friendly combat and exchange of compliments, each goes their own way. Another opportunity to use arms comes John's way when he is taken by a sudden desire to visit the haughlands about the Holmes Water, drawn there by no other reason than "a feeling of pastoral quiet and old romance" (JBB 190) which hangs about the place. While there, he discovers Gilbert's dragoons sadistically torturing the local miller by making him hold back with his bare hands to working wheel of his watermill. He scares them away and emphatically refuses an offer by one of them to settle the matter by single combat as coming not from a man of honour. On his way back to his hiding-place John witnesses the martyrdom of the wise man of the cave and receives from him a final blessing. A martyr for his faith, the blind sage chooses for himself a truly Samson-like end, pulling down the stone shafts supporting the roof of the cave and burying himself and twenty dragoons who have come to arrest his people under the rubble.

Towards the end of summer, when Gilbert renews his pursuit, John joins a clan of local gypsies, the Baillies, and is cured by them of the fever which the autumn rains had brought on. They are noble people and worthy company for a gentleman like John, for despite their spurious claim to gentle origin as one of the bastard branches of a local gentry family, they are true nature's gentlemen, their leader, the self-styled Captain William Baillie displaying all the merits of a man of birth. The annual fair at Biggar which John attends with them furnishes the backdrop for a light-hearted prank and a serious battle. The first is occasioned again by an insult to womanhood. A drunken local at the fair chooses to call the Captain's wife names and throws a stone at her. Far from taking the side of the injured woman, the townspeople side with the aggressor and so deeply offend the gypsies. This calls for punishment and the Captain enlists John's help in playing a trick on the simple and superstitious country folk. The Captain, his son and John, who is captivated by "the romance of the thing" (JBB 224), don suits of crimson cloth and, with their ferocious expressions, looking like devils incarnate they ride into town and scatter the fair. The battle, which takes place between two rival gypsy clans, at first poses some problems for John. Owing his life to the Baillie clan, it would be only honourable for him to take their side in the struggle, were it not for the lowly nature of the skirmish, hardly fitting for a nobleman. Though taunted for cowardice, he resolves to stay out of the fray. But here again the chivalrous

impulse to defend the defenceless, the young girls and little children left in his care, fires his blood and when one of the assailants throws a knife at a girl, he forgets his scruples about getting involved and, drawing his sword, rushes into battle. He fights his way to the very front and engages the enemy's second-in-command, fighting like some ancient king surrounded by his loyal gypsy bodyguard. He almost loses his life doing his duty by his adopted people, his involvement having favourably reversed the course of the battle and he himself having been instrumental in bringing down one of their chief adversaries. His adventurous summer has benefited him greatly, robbing him of worldly pretensions and satiating his desire for violent action, or as he himself admits:

I had not a rag left of gentility, save maybe the sword which still swung at my side. In this fashion I rode by Baillie's elbow in a mood neither glad nor sad, but sunk in a sort of dogged carelessness. (JBB 234)

However, living the life of an outlaw with no prospects of improving his status and avenging his persecutor, he has reached an impasse. But here again fortune intervenes, for word is brought to Scotland of William of Orange's landing and James II's flight from the throne, which signals the end of the persecution of Covenanters. John is once again a free man and he hastily leaves the Baillies to rejoin Marjory, only to discover that the really serious part of his quest is still ahead of him. Gilbert has abducted the girl and is fleeing into the impenetrable Highlands of the West. As winter is rapidly coming on, this last and hardest part of John's journey of maturation takes place in a truly merciless environment, compared to which his exploits in summer were mere child's play. His joyous boy's pranks and playing at soldiering now give way to serious manly deeds, as he doggedly pursues his opponent into a territory no longer his former playground but a country hostile and strange where he has to use every ounce of courage and skill he possesses to reach his goal. The dull languor, which had oppressed his spirit in hiding, is lifted and replaced by a steely resolve and a new self-possession completely lacking in personal vanity, symbolized by his refusal to exchange his gypsy rags for something more befitting his regained status until his quest is over.

The imagery of this part of John's quest has heavy Gothic overtones, a trait Buchan will adhere to in his later books as well when describing environments related to the operations of the villain. The landscape he traverses with his loyal servant is heavy, grey and lifeless, shrouded by a pall of snow. Gilbert's town house in Glasgow, the first stopping place of the fugitives, is "a dreary, ancient pile", a shell of a house more akin to "a vault of the dead" than a place of human habitation, which is presided over by an old crone of "a most witch-like appearance" (JBB 253–254). She cunningly bars his entrance, necessitating John's most arduous climb over the wall and a perilous descent into the courtyard like "some pit of the dead" (JBB 257), only to discover that the birds have recently flown. A thought of Marjory forced to travel in a gathering storm,

which aptly reflects John's inner turmoil, inspires a night journey into what is literal wilderness, "for the town of Glasgow stood on the last bounds of settled country, near the fierce mountains and black morasses of the Highlandmen" (JBB 259). Venturing into the unknown, ignorant of the course the fugitives are likely to have taken and fired by dark passions, John's dark night of the soul is mirrored by the landscape:

I have been abroad on many dark nights, but never have I seen one so black as this. /.../ The wind crooned and blew in gusts over the white waste, driving little flakes of snow about us, and cutting us to the bone with its bitter cold. Somewhere in the unknown distances we heard strange sounds – the awesome rumble of water or the cry of forlorn birds. All was as bleak as death, and in the thick darkness, what might otherwise have seemed simple and homelike was filled with vague terrors. I had shaped no path – all that I sought was to hasten somewhere nearer those we followed, and on this mad quest we stumbled blindly forward. (Ibid.)

The terrain is most difficult, the travellers climbing steep hillsides, floundering into an almost bottomless trench of moss-water, swimming across a furious icy burn and generally going through dreary bodily exertions enlivened by a storm-tossed crossing of a river in a boat and crowned by the last leg of the journey through a pathless quagmire. Finally Gilbert's ghostly castle is reached and the lady rescued through John's dramatic ascent of the castle wall to Marjory's bedchamber and the equally dramatic descent with the lady in his arms.

During this last part of his quest John comes to the realization that the uncommitted philosophical detachment he had prided himself on had been a delusion. The moment he realizes that he is in real danger of losing Marjory, he comes to recognize the depth of passion and hatred in his heart:

Some devil seemed to have possessed me. I had oft thought fondly in the past that my nature was not such as the wild cavaliers whom I had seen, but more that of the calm and reasonable philosopher. Now I laughed bitterly at these vain imaginings. For when a man's heart is stirred to its bottom with love or hatred all surface graces are stripped from it and the old primeval passions sway him, which swayed his father before him. (JBB 242)

This rage sustains him through the pursuit of his now deadliest enemy. A sense of destiny hangs heavily on him as he heads for the final confrontation "from which one or other of the combatants would never return" (JBB 242). Now that everything is at stake boyish rashness and foolish escapades are a thing of the past and his former hot-headedness has given way to a new coolness. Once Marjory is safely out of danger and heading home with John's servant, he is ready to meet his adversary with a mind calm and collected:

I had not a shade of fear or perturbation. Never in all my life had my mind been so wholly at ease. I waited for the coming of my enemy, as one would wait on a ferry or for the opening of a gate, quiet, calm, and fixed of purpose. (JBB 272–273)

John has finally achieved the object of his quest, a state of unruffled competence which ever since Castiglione postulated it as one of the indispensable accomplishments of a chivalrous man has stood high on a list of gentlemanly values. Not to baulk at a fight when it becomes inevitable but to handle it with composure and skill distinguishes a mature and competent man from a rash hothead who is driven by his emotional impulses. John also displays another highly prized chivalric virtue of magnanimity. Though he is resolved to fight Gilbert to the death, he does not despise the man. When they finally confront each other, John cannot but admire the man for his steely self-control and courage:

As I looked on him I hated him deeply and fiercely, and yet I admired him more than I could bear to think, and glorified that he was of our family. For I have rarely seen a nobler figure of a man. I am not little, but in his presence I felt dwarfed. (JBB 273)

John is the first of Buchan's many heroes who, far from gloating over the humiliation of the enemy at the moment of victory, are willing to recognize in their adversary greater merit and accomplishments than their own and are overcome by pity when they perish.

As befits gentlemen, John and Gilbert decide to settle their differences by single combat. For the last time in his life John is roused to a storm of fury as they fight in deadly earnest. For the moment pity is forgotten and replaced by malice when Gilbert seems to weaken and John can savour the moment of victory before administering the last blow. Ultimately the ugly task of taking his kinsman's life is spared John. One of Gilbert's own dragoons, who had long borne a grudge against him for having seduced his bride, has followed him to his hiding-place and now shoots him in the neck. In a trice John's rage evaporates and he pursues the murderer to the latter's death plunge into a churning stream. All hatred is forgotten as John rushes back to dying Gilbert's side. They make their peace and part in friendship. As John walks away from Gilbert's body to summon the servants, he muses on the ways of the world:

I walked off for help with all speed, and my thoughts were sober and melancholy. Shame had taken me for my passion and my hot fit of revenge; ay, and pity and kindness for my dead opponent. The old days when we played together by Tweed, a thousand faint memories came back to me, and in their light the last shades of bitterness disappeared. Also the truth came home to me as I went, how little the happiness of man hangs on gifts and graces, and how there is naught in the world so great as the plain virtues of honour and heart. (JBB 279)

He settles Gilbert's affairs, clears his own name and marries Marjory. Though pressured into assuming public office of some kind, he opts to live out the Aristotelian ideal of retirement and contemplation. Politics and warfare may have associations of nobility and grandeur but they are not conducive to

happiness which presupposes a modicum of comfort and leisure. The life of the intellect, on the other hand, was for Aristotle the highest form of activity and the source of greatest felicity. Thus we see John happily settling down on his estate, scorning rumours and temptations of the wider world and finding his greatest joy in the company of books. As befits a squire who moves with the times, he sets about improving his estate, planting woods, enlarging ponds and turning his tenants' fields and cottages into a smiling Arcadia. The fourteenth-century peel tower is abandoned in favour of a new classical mansion which he fills with works of art and curiosities collected on his travels abroad. His greatest pride and joy though are his treatises on philosophers ancient and modern. Having experienced both the active and passive life, he feels confident that what he has to offer to his readers is a more balanced and just view of things.

Francis Birkenshaw (*A Lost Lady of Old Years*)

The plain virtues of honour and heart are also the main themes of Buchan's third novel, *A Lost Lady of Old Years*, but its protagonist, Francis Birkenshaw, embarks on his quest for self-knowledge not with the light-hearted confidence of a born aristocrat secure in the knowledge of his own worth but under the shadow of illegitimacy and disgrace. The dormant virtue in his soul is awakened despite himself and through the agency of a beautiful woman. It is again an allegory of maturation, the hero journeying into an unknown and hostile landscape to come face to face with own nature. It is also a study of courtly love, largely conventional and yet at times startlingly revelatory of the darker side of passion which Buchan in later books takes care not to investigate too closely.

J. Robertson has seen in the book "a bleak, unromantic view of human nature, when divisions between heroism and villainy, honour and infamy, youth and old age, are ragged, and in places broken entirely" (1995: vii). In the present writer's opinion the whole novel hinges upon the supremely romantic idea of the mystique of superior blood and inherited virtue which is irresistible and the workings of which can be delayed but not obliterated by adverse circumstances. Buchan was later to develop this idea at length in *The Path of the King* but already here his main thesis comes across very clearly. That this virtue is not very attractive but rather hard and unlovely is due to its Calvinist nature, which nevertheless does not detract from its nobility. Francis Birkenshaw's path to virtue might indeed look ragged and halting but his course never wavers, despite his occasional doubts. It is determined by his blood and ancestry and the outcome is inevitable from the start. Robertson also calls his quest "a journey towards virtue which he makes in spite of his own nature" (ibid.). It might rather be said, in spite of what he *imagines* his nature to be.

That Francis starts out with a whole set of misguided notions and self-delusions which are easily and quickly debunked as he makes his attempt to embark on a life of vice, shows their ephemeral nature and provides moments of true comedy in an otherwise grim book. To underline Francis's inherently moral nature, Buchan has provided him with a double who truly is what Francis only imagines himself to be and whose low birth determines his path not towards virtue but vice.

Francis's ancestry is sound, if not very complimentary in terms of glamour and dash. His forefathers had been insignificant Border raiders, unsung in ballads but persevering, steadily adding field to field and herd to herd, laying a firm basis to their prosperity. Decency and order were their watchwords and instead of embracing heroic causes they had embraced trade.

While the old poor Tweedies, Horsebrocks, and Burnets, whose names were in a hundred songs and tales, who had fought with quixotic gallantry always on the losing side, and spent their substance as gaily as they had won it, sank into poverty and decline, the crabbed root of the Birkenshaws budded and put forth shoots. With anxious eyes and prayerful lips they held on their wonted path, delighting in the minutes of bargaining and religious observance, yet full of pride of house and brave with the stubborn valour of the unimaginative. (LL 3-4)

They would have little differed from the burly farmers around them, if "their pride of race" and "inherited spirit" (LL 4) had not reminded, on rare but memorable occasions, to their neighbours of the passion and ferocity of their moss-trooping ancestors. There were tales of dark deeds and violence of the house of Birkenshaw but no romance. The women they had married were as hard and prudent as themselves and as a result the stock produced no weaklings. Despite their sinking to the level lowly traders, they did not entirely neglect virtue, "cultivating honesty with the greatest diligence" (ibid.). Developing a reputation for singular uprightness, they set "diligence, honour, and a freedom from gross vices on the one hand, and passion, relentless severity, and little love for their neighbours on the other, and, finding the result to be a species of pride, labelled it an excellence" (LL 5). Living frugal and toilsome lives in their melancholy tower, feared and hated, their chief drawback as men of noble blood is their manifest lack of nonchalance, the foremost prerequisite of grace. Never doing anything with abandon, not even taking time to enjoy a little sport on their lands, they cast out from among them the only scion of the family with some poetry in his soul.

The protagonist's father, a freakish caricature of all the prized family traits but gifted with an imaginative nature and kindness of heart, makes a shambles of his life by fathering a son with a blacksmith's daughter, is disowned by his stern father and dies after a dissolute and hard-drinking life thoroughly disgraced. In his "dim, confused way" he had made stumbling efforts to rise and his marrying of the girl in good faith had been motivated by "an indistinct sense of honour, a certain ill-defined compassionateness of heart, which he scarcely

realized and would not have sought to defend” (LL 7). Likewise, nobility of sentiment is not missing in the protagonist’s low-born mother who, despite being coarse and rather vulgar, deems it fit to sever the natural ties with her class and family to embrace heroic solitude in deference to a match superior to her status.

Francis, brought up in a slum and unaware of his noble ancestry, in his early youth displays all the brutal traits of his moss-trooping ancestors. His hot temper and hard fist earn him respect among his peers and he revolts against the settled comforts of his home. Instead of the family hearth, he is drawn to the taverns where tales of romance and adventure abound, this being the year of Bonnie Prince Charlie’s landing in Scotland. This last, the most romantic and futile of all the Jacobite rebellions will form the backdrop of Francis’s moral awakening. Before Francis can embark on his journey of redemption however, he has to sink low in order for his rise to be more spectacular. It must be said that Buchan is so keen on Francis’s virtue that his efforts initially to paint him in black colours are not entirely convincing, the more so because later in the book he glosses over his earlier whoring and drinking with a prudishness which is rather amusing. Thus we learn early in the book that, being drawn to the manly brutality and freedom of the tavern, a strain of inherited vice “made the darker side of it soon cease to appal him, and in time he passed from the place of a spectator to that of a partaker in many carousals, a sworn friend to half the riff-raff in the city, the ally of loose women and causeway sots” (LL 14), to be told a few dozen pages later, when he has embarked on his mission and is forced to drink a few cups in a highland tavern to lend credibility to his story, that he “had not been drunk above three times in his previous life” (LL 78). He also takes care to point out that all this carousing and sowing of the wild oats is done without pleasure, in an amateur, boyish kind of way:

His course was the recoil from the paths of fireside virtue, the outcome of something uncommon and heroic in a nature run to seed. At moments a sense of the folly of it all oppressed him, but the fatal rhetoric of a boy’s thoughts put the graver reflection to flight. He would regain his self-respect by fancying himself a man of the world, living with a hand close on the springs of life, one who in all his folly was something beyond his allies. And in consequence he sank but rarely into brutish drunkenness – a sin (for the confusion of all doctrines of heredity) which had little hold upon him – and even from such lapses recovered himself with a certain alertness of spirit. Yet this was but the immaturity of his character, a thing to pass away with years, and in a little Francis might have looked to grow to a blackguard of some quality. (LL 14)

Living the life of a lordly rake, his credit low and debts great, unaware that his despised mother is keeping the family afloat by monthly pensions from his uncle and not with some inherited portion that is his due, he leaves behind in Edinburgh a record of many deeds which do not bear close scrutiny when Fate

intervenes in his disorderly existence and sets him on a course which will be the making of his soul.

Francis's potential for romantic attachment is first indicated by a failed love affair with the provost's daughter in Dysart where he had gone to take up a position with the lawyer of the city. As he is as yet unable to control his temper, the mastery of which will be his chief achievement by the end of the book, he is prone to extremes of behaviour and promptly becomes her "slave" (LL 16), only to be told that she is already engaged. This causes a relapse from decent behaviour which the healthy atmosphere of the seaside town had at first induced. Francis abandons himself to grief and "from that hour till after the celebration of the wedding, drank more deeply than he had ever done before" (ibid.) and tells his employer to go to the devil. After a three-week drinking bout he comes to his senses and apologises for his behaviour, only to relapse again at a festive dinner where he meets his former lover and his rival, her husband. Going berserk with jealousy and rage at the husband's boastfulness, he stabs the man and runs into the woods. Though his victim survives, he fears the vindictiveness of townspeople and accepts an offer by a smuggler to take him to France on one of his boats. To avenge his rival, he has him arrested under false pretences and leaves Dysart hugely pleased with his boyish prank.

His new life, which he visualizes as that of an outlaw, he starts with a visit to his mother to demand his portion of what he imagines to be the family fortune. Knowing nothing of his mother's sacrifices and intent upon high adventure, he loathes the comfort of his home and its inmates, grumbling at the smallness of the sum he is given and despising their narrowness of soul. Surveying his former life from the lofty heights of imagined superiority, he cuts his ties with domesticity and sets out to "carve his fortune in the manner best suiting him without restraint of prejudice" (LL 19). His last act of bravado on leaving his native land is to strike a woman, one of his "aforetime comrades" (LL 21), an outcast like himself for whom he feels no pity. Having crossed this Rubicon into vice, he embarks on a new life:

A sense of high exhilaration grew upon him. He would follow his own desires, with the aid of a strong hand and a courageous heart. In this frame of mind the only baseness seemed to lie in settling upon his lees in the warm air of the reputable. A hard conscience and a ready hand were a man's truest honour, and with this facile catchword he went whistling into a new life. (LL 20)

Aboard the ship he is introduced to his double, a Mr Stark, who is to be his comic sidekick and mirror image for a part of the journey and will at the end, with his degeneracy, point out the moral of the story and demonstrate in his person what Francis might have become if he had pursued his downward course. Mr Stark, a lowly apprentice and would-be gentleman-adventurer, acts out the role Francis had envisioned for himself and in doing so, exposes to him the pretentiousness and stupidity of the wrong path to honour. Mr Stark is a

petty villain and a stupid boy in whose presence Francis feels compelled to play a man of the world and boastfully renounce all the virtues which he will later live to embrace as his own. In a fervour of self-admiration and the first heat of adventure, he affects to disdain honour and loyalty and claims to be a Jacobite running from the law. But even as he speaks, fully aware of his own role-playing, he is conscious of a jarring note when the apprentice echoes his sentiments in his rude and feeble way. His vision of his own lordly grandeur is badly dented when the smuggler demands money for his passage or physical toil. The emptiness of his gentlemanly refusal to bargain and readiness to draw his sword at what he perceives to be a violation of fair play, for he had imagined that the captain would take him across out of an elevated sense of friendship, is exposed and made to look ridiculous by the sight of his quaking companion who “clearly had no love for the sight of steel” (LL 27). The prospect of being carried ignominiously into the next harbour by the boat’s crew hurts his pride and he feels a “sudden yearning towards virtue” (LL 28). He decides to swim to the shore at Berwick and cross the Lowlands to find better terms for crossing in the west. Some streak of “hidden generosity” (LL 29) makes him accept Mr Stark as his travel companion.

Francis’s rebirth into virtue occurs, quite predictably, when he enters the valley of the Tweed. The cleansing power of nature and especially Buchan’s beloved river work their magic also on Francis’s unregenerate nature and the deeper the two travel companions progress into the landscape the more unbearable Francis’s own role becomes. Significantly, considering future events, the decisive moment comes when they seek lodging at a house in Berwick and are taken for Jacobites on the run. Francis is forced into an honest and hot denial that starts to rankle. Having cried to the landlady,

I wadna stir my thoomb for a’ the Charlies that ever whistled. Gin this were a change-house, mistress, and a bowl o’ yill were on the board afore me, ye wad see me drink damnation to a’ Pretenders, and health to King Geordie (LL 33),

he is ashamed of the deception, especially so because the woman had refused to take payment and had urged him to live like an honest man. This unexpected “fall into virtue” (LL 35) is partly due to his growing awareness of his roots, for the travellers have entered the lands of his ancestors:

Francis was diverted against himself, and, ere ever he knew, the old glamour of the countryside had fallen upon him. He too, it was his proud reflection, was a son of this land, born of a family whose race was old as the hills and waters. The ancient nameless charm which slumbered with the green hillsides, flashed in the streams, and hung over the bare mosses, stole unbeknown into his soul, and the stout Francis was led captive by the poetry of the common world. (LL 36)

This lofty reflection is offset by the silly behaviour of Mr Stark who, true to principles Francis still thinks his own, does not scruple to steal a cut of dried beef from a poor woman’s cottage. He expects approval from his elder

companion in vice, but an act “so aimlessly childish, so petty”, not of a man of the world but of “a knavish boy” (ibid.) rouses Francis’s ire and he decides to teach the younger man a lesson. They go back to the cottage to pay for it but the woman would not accept payment. In “much the same temper as the Christian who laments the failure of judgement upon the wicked” (LL 37) the despairing Francis is further disgusted by his companion getting grossly drunk at the next pub. The former carouser finds Mr Stark’s drunken heroics now so off-putting that further travelling together would be unthinkable. Moreover, we learn that Francis “had never loved drunkenness” (ibid.) and that he can now control his temper. Pride of ancestry is stirring in him, now that he is moving within “the confines of his own land” (LL 38), and he is driven to reflect on his failing career as a sinner. The recent flashes of decency have dented his view of the world as a pitiless battleground and in a world “where he wins who is least saddled with the baggage of virtue” (ibid.) and man preys on man, he has to admit that Mr Stark and not he has “the true spirit” (LL 39).

Destiny awaits Francis in Broughton in the shape of a woman whose true historical record is equivocal but whom Buchan has turned into a lady of pure romance. Mrs Murray of Broughton, the wife of the Young Pretender’s trusted secretary who later turns traitor, in Buchan’s treatment will play the role of the disdainful and unattainable mistress of the tradition of courtly love and inspire in Francis a fervent desire to do knightly deeds. She will also be instrumental in bringing along reconciliation in Francis’s breast with his own aristocratic origin.

His last act of villainy before his transformation into a questing knight is house-breaking. A former acquaintance from Edinburgh low life has come to the town with the aim of robbing the Murray residence which allegedly stands empty. Francis is in two minds whether to help him or not, and still fancying himself a daring adventurer, fleeing from “the dreary paths of the respectable” (LL 43), agrees, though his “vanishing pride” would have beaten the “little city blackguard” (ibid.). Virtue indeed for gentlemen has always resided in the country, not town, as Francis is about to discover for himself and his “singular antipathy” to the “tribe of aristocrats”, filled with “pride of race and the fantastic notions of honour from which he had parted for ever” (LL 41) will shortly be turned into fervent admiration. The plan which in town had had the glamour of a daring escapade, seems less savoury when the would-be robbers reach the hills. Inside the house it grows even more loathsome but he pursues with the plan for fear of seeming to lack the proper spirit. The house is not empty, as it turns out, and Francis comes face to face with the woman he had heard toasted and slandered in Edinburgh taverns. She mistakes him for a fellow conspirator’s servant but he is overcome with love:

This was the famous lady whom he had so often heard of, she who was the Cause, the Prince, and the King to so many loyal gentlemen. His eyes glori- ed in her beauty, for somewhere in his hard nature there was an ecstatic joy in mere loveliness. But the bodily perfection was but a drop in the cup of his

astonishment. She had clearly been receiving guests in this old house, and guests of quality, for the rich white gown was like a state dress, and jewels flashed at her neck and fingers. A swift and violent longing seized him to be one of her company, to see her before him, to be called her friend. In her delicate grace she seemed the type of all he had renounced for ever – nay, not renounced, for in his turbid boyhood he had had no glimpse of it. To this wandering and lawless man for one second the elegancies of life were filled with charm, and he sighed after the unattainable. (LL 47)

Though violent, the imprint on his mind is not yet strong enough to swerve him irrevocably from his chosen path and he is determined to sell the letter entrusted to him to the government troops. Not yet full cognizant of his own aristocratic nature, he is briefly overcome with class hatred for having been treated like a servant and gleefully pictures his own career as a government spy, only to be brought back to earth by another meeting with Mrs Murray who has meanwhile realized her mistake and catches up with him at the inn where he had gone to look for government soldiers. Here Buchan uses the mirror effect again to heighten the impact of Francis's fall from grace. Imagining himself the careless and indomitable man of intrigue, he had tried to picture to himself how he would crush this proud and clever lady who had "filled his whole fancy with her hateful beauty", only to discover that the "exquisite freshness of her beauty forbade her a place in a gallery of harlots" where he had tried to consign her "and to his disgust he found himself forced to regard her with decency" (LL 50). At the inn Mr Stark reappears to be made Francis's confidant but his childish enthusiasm and silly wickedness from which Francis is now outgrown no longer please but irritate and his pragmatic suggestion that they might open the letter to see what it contains fills him with revulsion. Audacious high treachery might still be acceptable but no longer any low huckstering. His further steps on the path of dishonour are prevented by the arrival of Mrs Murray who at a glance gleans the meaning of the little conclave and gives vent to her scorn for men who "cower in an alehouse and lay plots for women" (LL 57) when true men are out fighting for their honour and their King. Still mistaking Francis for an errant servant, she strikes him in the face with her whip. Mr Stark decides to flee in terror but

Francis stood immovable, his mind crushed and writhing, his cheeks flaming with disgrace. This bright creature before him had tumbled his palace of cards about his ears. He felt with acid bitterness the full ignominy, the childish, servile shame of his position. The charm of her young beauty drove him frantic; her whole mien, as of a world unknown to him and eternally beyond his reach, mocked him to despair. For a moment he was the blacksmith's grandson, with the thought to rush forward, wrest the whip from her hands, and discomfit this proud woman with his superior strength. But some tincture of the Birkenshaw blood held him back. In that instant he knew the feebleness of his renunciation of virtue. Some power not himself forbade the extremes of disgrace – some bequest from more gallant forebears, some lingering wisp of honour. He stood with

bowed head, not daring to meet her arrogant eyes, careless of the lash which curled round his cheek and scarred his brow. Marvellous the power of that slender arm! He felt the blood trickle over his eyes and half blind him, but he scarce had a thought of pain. (LL 57–58)

Crushed with shame, he flees to the moors and considers his position:

He had wholly lost his old sentiment of bravado; he saw his flimsy schemes wither before the bright avenging presence and himself a mere knavish servant in his eyes. In his misery the sight of her obstructed all his vision. At one moment he hated her with deadly vehemence; at the next he would have undergone all humiliation for a sight of her face. The inflated romance which had first driven him out on his travels was centred for the time on this one woman, and with it there followed the bitterness of despair. (LL 59)

He had failed in his role of the high-handed adventurer and also in his attempt at treachery. Likewise the prospect of seeking his fortune overseas is suddenly less attractive. There is a vague sentiment growing in his heart associated with his own country and the impending wars, but neither side holds any particular attractions for him and when asked what side he is on, he can truly answer that his own. This wavering indifference, however, is shown to be the result not so much of his lack of spirit but exposure to true valour. Edinburgh, where he goes just after the Jacobite victory at Prestonpans, is awash with Highland colours and stories of brave men and heroic deeds which make him feel like a misplaced alien in his native city. He is particularly affected by the stirring music of the bagpipes, “a ringing call to action, a paeon over the vanquished, the chant of the heroic” (LL 64). In this hour of triumph, when “creeds and practice were forgotten in the common homage to bravery” (ibid.) by the citizen and Jacobite alike, he again sees Mrs Murray. She is riding proudly in the Prince’s retinue, a vision of glorious devotion to the cause, and his fate is sealed. All his past life is hateful to him now but his acute misery also seems to be shaping to a purpose:

He might yet redeem all and play a manful part in life. He had tried the role of the adventurer and failed; yet there remained the more difficult part of honour. The portrait of the lady which filled his mind seemed not wholly adamant. He had a dim remembrance of a gleam of pity at the inn, and the white light of enthusiasm at the pageant of the morning. He thought upon his first meeting at the House of Broughton, and her graciousness, which then had roused his bitterness, seemed now his one hope of salvation. Before, his pride had been his manifest attribute; now, he realized clearly and mournfully that the time had come to humble himself to virtue. It was a grievous thought to the arrogant nature, but as he wandered through the streets in the late afternoon he was compelled inexorably to submit. And as a purpose shaped itself his humility grew deeper, till it brought him to unconditional surrender. (LL 66)

“In a pitiable state of fear” (LL 67) he goes and offers his services to her, wilting under her scorn when she tells him he has defiled the name of his great and honourable house:

Deep hidden in his nature was a pride of race and name, the stronger for its secrecy. Now he saw it dragged forth and used as a touchstone for his misdeeds. It was the sharpest weapon in the whole armoury of reproach. (LL 69)

But the lady is merciful and, taking faith in the honest blood in his veins, offers him a chance of repentance, for as she remarks, “Gentlemen are none so common that one should be lost in the making.” (Ibid.) Francis begs to be put on trial to prove worthy of her trust and they seal their bond with an ancient oath of fealty.

Francis’s quest which now begins takes him on a mission to the Highlands to persuade the still equivocating Lord Lovat to join the Prince’s party. Like his new cause, it is doomed to failure and like the quixotic bravery of the rebels, his own heroic attempts to complete it will be useless and lead ultimately to destruction. Yet in the process he comes to the full realization of his manly potential and the meaning of true honour.

Riding into the great wastelands of the North, he is filled with the sense of wild adventure, his “dawning virtue” (LL 74) lending his journey into the unknown the gloss and mystery of a crusade. Though soaked to the bone, he glories in his strength to defy the powers of nature and thinks of himself lovingly as a “doughty knight-errant” (LL 75). But before he can truly apply this title to himself he has a lot to learn, not least about himself, for in the very first evening he slides back into his old ways and with a boisterous company of drunken Highlanders at a wayside inn drinks the health not only of his Prince and Cause but of his lady, thus soiling her good name by association with the vulgar throng. It is his complex relationship with Lord Lovat, whom he manages to persuade to commit himself to the Cause in writing, which teaches him the meaning of true manliness. Progressing from initial disgust to filial affection throughout the year of the Prince’s advance and retreat, it amounts for Francis to a rite of passage which ends at the gallows when he shares the great man’s last moments before death.

The letter, the only evidence of Lord Lovat’s commitment to the Jacobite cause which Francis was to deliver to the Prince or destroy should the uprising fail, reaches the treacherous Secretary Murray at the moment of defeat and becomes the instrument of the great chief’s destruction. Francis’s heroic attempts to first deliver it and then retrieve it all prove futile but not so his quest. Subjected to one cruel trial after another, he comes to know the true meaning of every chivalric virtue and becomes worthy of his aristocratic heritage.

When he first comes to Castle Dounie, Lord Lovat’s Highland residence, he is exposed to the kind of old world largesse and hospitality which in the more

modern Lowlands he has never seen. The head of the clan, once the first lord among Highland chiefs, a great statesman and patriot, a friend of kings and adviser to the greatest of the land, in his dotage has lost much of his finesse and elicits in Francis a mixture of pity and disgust. His false pathos and maudlin sentimentality, with which he cloaks his self-seeking designs, for there is dukedom for him in the game should the Prince win, fills Francis with rage and he determines to see to it that the wily old lord would not play false to the Cause which he has embraced. Yet his determination to deliver the letter is frustrated by his lack of knowledge of the terrain through which he travels and he loses his way in a fog, his horse plunges to his death down a ravine and he breaks his ankle. Wandering aimlessly in the moors, he is picked up, feverish and raving, by some of Lovat's clansmen and nursed back to health. As he lies in his sickbed throughout the winter, lost to the outside world, his Cause is defeated and his letter undelivered. In the humble cottage he learns the Highlanders' selfless generosity and comradeship freely given, even love from the daughter of the family which he rejects out of dedication to his memory of the lady who had sent him on his errand. Having barely recovered his wits and pathetically weak, he proves his hardiness by making with his last strength the journey to Culloden on the eve of the fatal battle to fulfil his duty and hand over the letter to Secretary Murray, with the injunction to destroy it should the Cause fail. The promise is readily given and Francis can consider his mission fulfilled but the carnage the next day so disorients him that, frustrated by his own helplessness, he is swept along in the fugitive party of the Prince and dropped at Lovat's residence of Gortuleg. As he had talked the chief into joining the now defeated Cause, he feels a vague duty to see it to the end at his side but this sentiment evaporates at the spectacle of the old man broken and in an agony of fear. His notion of loyalty unto death is to be sorely tested by the old man's fickle behaviour, his initial rejection of his offer to join him in his last stand, his accusations and self-pity and his general decay of spirit which Francis finds hard to endure as it so closely mirrors his own desolation. Though it is not easy for Francis to hold on to heroism when its object rejects his generous offer of self-sacrifice and willingness to do his duty unto the last, he is determined to see the game to the end and with new-found humility asks to be his man. Lovat accepts him with feudal grandiloquence, reminding him that he has no longer anything to give him as a reward except his blessing. Though then lightly given and sceptically taken, this benediction will turn out to be Francis's most prized reward of all.

They flee north to Lovat's secret hideaway in the hills and during the journey and the subsequent stay at the retreat, Francis's commitment to his chosen chief undergoes a gradual change. The gross, derelict wreck of the once great man and his coarse vulgarity, which had elicited his overpowering disgust, are gradually overshadowed by intimations of greatness in the man and Francis, to his own surprise, comes to experience pity, a feeling novel to him. When

Murray visits the island, it becomes clear that he has a mind to give himself up to the authorities and will most likely buy his freedom with treachery. Lovat, who knows his fate to be now sealed, puts maudlin theatricals aside and stands revealed in simple majesty. Francis, who had thought of his mission to Lovat listlessly as an unpleasant but necessary evil, is overcome with emotion at the change and his life regains its purpose:

The image of the savage, heroic old man, his hypocrisy discarded, fronting death with equanimity, was burned on his mind. A fierce anger against Murray possessed him, and as he thought of what one proud woman would think of such conduct, and all the misery which awaited her, he groaned in bitterness of spirit. But his wits were clearer, now he had a plain duty before him, something which an active man might effect without presumption. Above all, now was his task more closely connected with her who had been his task-mistress. Henceforth he wrought for her direct, palpable good. (LL 139–140)

He had not acknowledged to himself that at the bottom of his dogged determination to share Lovat's fortunes had been his love for Mrs Murray who had been the one to send him on his errand and the next leg of his journey south in pursuit of Murray, and further self-knowledge, is dedicated to his sentimental education. At this point Francis enters "the realms of wild romance" (LL 141) and is rewarded with love. He finds the lady abandoned by her husband, no longer the glorious but disdainful beauty who had condescended to receive him amid a glittering court, but lonely and helpless, refined and made more humane by sorrow, who begs for his help. Love and hate, which had competed in his breast, now melt into compassion, another novel feeling for a man who had scorned all women. Interestingly, Buchan seems to have completely forgotten about Francis's mother and sisters after he had bid them goodbye and this amnesia persists until the end of the book. Francis persistently claims himself to be kinless, a lonely wanderer in the world with nobody to mourn him should he die and when he actually dies, a wealthy and respected man, he leaves his fortune to his burgh, with no mention of any of his relatives. One gets the nagging feeling that Francis's new-found refinement of feeling embraces only women worthy of such elevated sentiments, his next of kin being disqualified from such attention due to their low birth.

Francis accompanies Mrs Murray to London to protect her and also to find a way to talk to Murray in the Tower about Lovat's letter. On the way has a chance both to reaffirm and renounce his past. At Carlisle he meets his uncle in the street and, after the latter's initial doubts, wins his approval for his mission, thus being reaccepted into the family. Near Warwick he is accosted by his erstwhile companion, Mr Stark, who is in final stages of degradation and forcibly reminds Francis of what he could have become had he not embarked on the path of virtue. But the meeting is also unsettling, for he knows fully well how thin the veneer of his virtue really is and this only strengthens his resolve to pursue it more fiercely.

His ultimate test and also confirmation that he has qualified as a man of honour comes in London. The price of having a chance to talk to Murray in prison and retrieve the letter is quite literally his life. He is given an option to exchange places with him in the cell and be hanged in his stead to save for Mrs Murray the life of her husband and also Lovat's life by engineering the escape of the most damaging and inconvenient witness of his trial. His fearless acceptance of the terms earns him the approval of the highest authority in his eyes, the Lord President of Scotland, who has witnessed his halting progress in virtue and can now pronounce him "a very gallant gentleman" (LL 180). But Murray refuses to escape, choosing treacherous safety over perilous exile and Francis is so enraged that he has a mind to put him to death. This would solve all his problems but he has now progressed so far on the road to honour that he cannot bring himself to attack a defenceless opponent.

If Murray's cowardice stands for supreme disgrace, Lovat's final performance in court is the epitome of honourable conduct. Fighting a lost battle with a foregone conclusion, he manfully stands up in his own defence and accepts the sentence of death with cheerful composure. Francis is overcome with admiration:

This, after all, was the fortunate warrior, who could go out of life with a twitch of his cloak and a word of scorn to his tormentors. The grossness, the cunning, the malice were all forgotten; he remembered only Lovat of the many generous sentiments, the great chief of Fraser, and the wisest brain in the North. (LL 190)

He secures a permission to visit him in his cell the night before his execution and is further impressed by the atmosphere of riotous mirth that greets him. Full of jest and vitality until the end, Lovat refuses to indulge in self-pity both when saying goodbye to his clansmen or facing the crowds on Tower Hill. Having absolved Francis of any blame in his downfall and blessed him the night before, he now bestows on him the final honour by inviting him to share his last moments on earth. In a fever of devotion Francis climbs the scaffold to assist the great man in his final struggle and in doing so learns the meaning of a glorious last stand.

His own maturation process is now complete and he has to confront his future.

It stretched grey and level before him, featureless, even now unalterable. There was but one thing for him to do. For the last year he had been striving desperately towards virtue. Now he must return to the writer's office and his old evil reputation. He must go back to Dysart and settle there as the solid man of law, and try to work out for himself a position of respect. There must be no quixotry, no thought of mad capers in wars overseas. He must shape out his salvation in the place he had been called to, and settle to a life of loneliness cut off for ever from the past.

The thought was bleak, but he never wavered, for the man had true steel and fire in his soul, and had the daring to face an age of melancholy and routine, and he too in years but at the threshold of life. (LL 202)

This new resolve entails the renunciation of the consummation of love. The unvoiced understanding which has been growing between him and Mrs Murray has to be sacrificed to a higher ideal than mere domesticity. Though she openly offers love and a chance to make a home together abroad, he, “the eternal wanderer” “ever in revolt from the domestic”, is unwilling to degrade her by bringing her “into the glare of common day and the pettiness of household life” (LL 203). A lady of romance should stay on her pedestal, a memory, a name on the lips of a questing knight fighting his lonely battles in life.

In fact, when we look at the evolution of their relationship in the light of courtly love, we can see that Francis has progressed through all the stages of the questing knight in love and has attained its highest and purest form. The conventions of such liaisons decreed that a knight who aspired to moral improvement through love must pledge himself to his lady as his vassal, seek her love not for enrichment or personal gain, his suit should be long and arduous and be rewarded by the lady’s love freely given in recognition of his noble deeds. The lovers being socially incompatible, the lady usually being married already, the consummation of the relationship in marriage would be out of the question but the lovers would pledge themselves to each other in secret and carry their love to their graves as their most cherished possession. The ennobling element for the lover in his striving would be the suspense and purifying emotional turmoil he goes through in order to raise himself to the level of his beloved. Love enhances virtue and suppresses vice, cultivating in the lover all the knightly virtues and inducing in him a special state of mind, a combination of generosity and lightness of mind which is a reward in itself. The restrictions the lover imposes on himself in his quest serve to heighten his feelings, their consummation being even undesirable, as it would diminish their intensity.

In the course of the book Francis, a gauche and self-important young man with no social graces or discretion grows into an exemplary romantic lover whose true nobility of nature is awakened by falling in love and pledging himself to a lady far superior to himself, both socially and morally. He learns discretion by schooling himself to hide his passion, both from the lady herself and the vulgar crowd. He attains humility through self-denial and refines his passion so that it transcends mere lust. His moral education is rewarded by the lady falling in love with him, the fact itself recognizing Francis’s elevation to the same high spiritual and social plane as her own, the relationship at this stage becoming confidential and friendly. The element of lust is deliberately removed and downplayed the moment love is recognized to keep the relationship pure, though he is rewarded by a brief period of joy and happiness in her company during their journey to London together. Characteristically, this episode in the

book is passed over quickly, lest it should diminish the overall tragic effect which is achieved by prolonging their farewells and pledges of undying love. In fact there is nothing really which should keep them apart except Francis's newfound virtue and his determination not to consummate the relationship in order to keep his feelings in a heightened state of awareness. He could well go on serving her abroad, even without cohabiting with her, but that would imply social elevation to circles which are not his own and smack of material reward. His moral education must be shown to have instilled in him a sense of duty and selfless service, the intensity of his secret love carrying him through his lonely life dedicated to the service of the community. This indefinite postponement of consummation, a complete dedication to one woman unsullied by even a hint of promiscuity and the sublimation of erotic desire into unblemished virtue was known to the troubadours as *fin' amors* and marked the attainment of the peak of man's moral development. From the modern perspective Francis's lonely life in Dysart might look grim and unnecessarily austere but according to the canons of courtly love, he had attained the greatest happiness.

* * *

Modern gentlemen of the blood make their appearance in the early works of Buchan in various guises, probing various themes which he will later develop into novels. With rare exceptions, like the Border laird's ineffectual son in the short story 'Summer Weather', whose brief burst of heroic action, when he saves the village people and his beloved cousin from a rabid dog, which is treated comically, these are highly serious men whom we may call iron dreamers. Some of them, as we shall see, are also explorers and crusaders, some empire-builders, some heroic scholars, all united by a quality of certain aloofness and a sense of not fitting in which makes their resolve to prove themselves even fiercer. Frequently misunderstood, they fight their lonely battles in distant locations, unrecognized by their peers but remaining true to their own noble nature.

Salvation Captain ('A Captain of Salvation')

A very early and interesting example is the anonymous Captain of the Salvation Army in the short story of the same name which is modelled on the New Testament story of Christ's temptation by the Devil. It takes place in an imaginary East End of London and traces the heroic struggle of a fallen aristocrat to rise from the depth of ignominy he has fallen into due to his obstinate pride. His struggle is rendered in terms of a moral crusade and is full of chivalrous imagery.

The Salvation Army was at the time of writing (in the mid 1890s) just hovering on the brink of respectability, its founder General Booth receiving formal recognition by being given an audience by Edward VII in 1904, but it was still a working-class movement, much derided and ridiculed, campaigning against poverty and prostitution in the worst kind of slums with a devotion unmatched by any other Christian denomination. (Hattersley 2004: 384–385) Our hero, whom former friends call just Jack, has fallen to the very bottom of society and in order to make his soul, he has to overcome his revulsion for his new environment and offer selfless service to those whom his nobler nature finds it impossible not to despise.

His fall from grace is conventionally sketched, as are those traits of character which can raise a man to great heights or turn him into a villain:

The Captain was a man of some forty years, tall, with a face deeply marked with weather and evil living. An air of super-induced gravity served only to accentuate the original. His countenance was a sort of epitome of life, full of traces of passion and nobler impulse, with now and then a shadow of refinement and a passing glimpse of breeding. His history had been of that kind which we would call striking, were it not so common. A gentleman born, a scholar after a fashion, with a full experience of the better side of civilisation, he had begun life as well as one can nowadays. For some time things had gone well, then came the utter and irretrievable ruin. A temptation which meets many men in their career met him, and he was overthrown. His name disappeared from the books of his clubs, people spoke of him in a whisper, his friends were crushed with shame. As for the man himself, he took it otherwise. He simply *went under*, disappeared from the ranks of life into the seething, struggling, disordered crowd below. He, if anything, rather enjoyed the change, for there was in him something of that brutality which is a necessary part of the natures of great leaders of men and great scoundrels. The accidents of his environment had made him the latter; he had almost the power of proving the former, for in his masterful brow and firm mouth there were hints of extraordinary strength. His record after his downfall was as picturesque a record as needs be. Years of wandering and fighting, sin and cruelty, generosity and meanness followed. There were few trades and few parts of the earth in which he had not tried his luck. (CSS/I 29–30)

Two years previously a violent change had occurred, brought on by some strong words from an ignorant preacher and he had embraced a life of virtue, joining the Salvation Army.

His struggle is a most romantic one, the Byronic hero, “a wanderer like Cain” (CSS/I 30) seeking redemption, for which he has to crush his proud spirit, for he fully recognizes that for him “the grace of God was only an elegant name for his own pride of will” (ibid.). We meet him in springtime, the season of “unrest and promise” (CSS/I 29) in the stinking London slum of Limehouse. It is a season of temptation and the Captain feels a turmoil in his soul which reflects the disquietude outside.

He has to undergo a series of trials to test the strength of his faith and the first comes when he goes on a money-collecting errand to the West End. He performs his task as a deliberate exercise of resignation, moving in his former habitat hungry and despised. “Old ungodly longings after luxury” (CSS/I 30) come to torment him and he finds it difficult to keep his peace. Interestingly, renunciation of luxury was posited by Digby also as one of the knightly accomplishments when he redefined the chivalric code for the nineteenth century, as was contempt for money. He overcomes the pull of his former life with great difficulty, managing to suppress his revulsion for his room and food and the inane and ludicrous company of his brothers and sisters in faith.

The same evening he is to lead “a crusade” of the Salvation Army hymn-singers into the wilderness of the Docks, “the stronghold of Satan” (CSS/I 32). In this hotbed of vice temptation is more difficult to overcome and he is teased by visions of what might have been if he had chosen to re-enter his former life. Thoughts of ambition, society, respectability and a happy home fill him with “evil craving”, for as yet he is “unregenerate in nature” (CSS/I 35), but the leaven is working in him and he can face the Vanity Fair of the Docklands with equanimity. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* was one of the seminal influences in Buchan’s life and he frequently resorts to imagery employed there. In this hub of vice the Captain, who is the standard-bearer, is accosted by a prostitute, a former mistress of his.

The Captain looked to the side, and his glance rested upon her face. It was as if the Devil and all his angels were upon him that night. Evil memories of his past life thronged thick and fast upon him. He had already met and resisted the world, and now the flesh had come to torment him. But here his armour was true and fast. This was a temptation which he had choked at the very outset of his reformation. He looked for one moment at her, and in the utter loathing and repugnance of that look, she fell back; and the next instant was left behind. (CSS/I 36)

They next enter the back alleys of the Docklands, “the hotbed of legalised crime” (CSS/I 37) where the scum of many nations come together in the “Sodom” of well-fed and pampered vice.

The repulsive, self-satisfied faces of the men, the smug countenances of the women, made that little band seem hopeless and Quixotic in the extreme. The Captain felt it, too; but in him there was mingled another feeling. He thought of himself as a combatant entering the arena. He felt dimly that some great struggle was impending, some monstrous temptation, some subtle wile of the Evil One. The thought made him the more earnest. ‘Sing up, men,’ he cried, ‘the Devil is strong in the place.’ (CSS/I 37)

He is indeed and comes to tempt him in person. He takes the form of his former comrade in arms, “the most daring and jovial of them all” with whom he had been “hand and glove in all manner of evil” (ibid.). Like Satan tempting Christ

in the wilderness, he conjures up for him all the riches and attractions of the four quarters of the earth, speaking of their adventures together when they were doing manly deeds in whatever part of the world took their fancy. This false appeal to his manliness is the most difficult to resist and requires all his willpower:

He felt the magic of the east, the wonder of the South, the glory of the North burning in his heart. The old wild voices were calling him, voices of the land and sea, the tongues of the moon and the stars and the beasts of the field, the halcyon voices of paganism and nature which are still strong in the earth. Behind him rose the irregular notes of the hymn; at his side was the tempter, and in his own heart was the prince of the world, the master of pleasure, the great juggler of pain. In that man there was being fought the old fight, which began in the Garden, and will never end, the struggle between the hateful right and the delicious wrong. (CSS/I 39)

After a spasm of “exquisite agony” (ibid.) our soldier of Christ, his struggle for the moment won, clutching the flag urges his brethren to fight on the good fight.

Maitland ('Fountainblue')

In this short story, set in the Scottish Highlands, we meet a different kind of crusader, also proud and bound to suffer for it, but a pillar of society and also a dreamer cast in the Byronic mould.

We first encounter the hero, Maitland, when he is a little boy on holiday at Fountainblue, a Highland castle, and witness the beginnings of his alienation and withdrawal from society. A lonely and romantic child who chafes against “domestic terrors” (CSS/II 27), he rebels against the idea of spending an afternoon with his boisterous cousins and makes for the hills. He is aware of his singular temper and unappealing character which is bound to make him lose out in competition with his more attractive cousins for the status of the favourite guest and that his running away from the house party would get him into trouble but “trouble, he had long ago found out, was his destiny, and he scorned to avoid it” (CSS/II 26). Like any budding Byronic hero, he feels a closer affinity with nature than with his own kind, taking delight in the craggy hills, the wild birds and beasts. Though “[h]alf-crying with regret for the delights he had forsworn” (ibid.) at the house, the “desolate little adventurer” (ibid.) takes pride in his heroism and a vision of himself as a hunter and trapper, the hardy outlaw who would outshine his prosaic cousins. His elation evaporates quickly when he returns to the house, for the other children’s joy in each other’s company takes the colour out of his whim to follow his own fancy. With stoical determination he resolves not to show any sign of disappointment:

If he was to be an outlaw, he would carry his outlawry well; so with a catch in his voice and tears in his eyes he jeered at his inattentive companions, upbraiding himself all the while for his folly. (CSS/II 27)

A lonely child grows into a lonely adult who has schooled himself against the disappointments of the world.

He was rich, very rich and famous. Few men of forty had his power, and he had won it all in fair struggle with enemies and rivals and a niggardly world. He had been feared and hated, as he had been extravagantly admired; he had been rudely buffeted by fortune, and had met the blows with a fighter's joy. And out of it all something hard and austere had shaped itself, something very much a man, but a man with little heart and a lack of kindly human failings. He was master of himself in a curious degree, but the mastery absorbed his interests. (CSS/II 28)

A habitual winner in life's stakes, he has set his mind on winning for himself a wife who as yet has rejected his advances and this threatens to destroy his hard-achieved peace of mind.

His cultivated business-like attitude to life has led others to believe that he lacks imagination. What is held against him, and what he indeed lacks, are the social graces. He comes across as ruthless and clever, two qualities always condemnable in a gentleman, and has the reputation of not caring for sport, not in the right spirit anyway. He is thought too earnest and keen, too intent on achievement to take sport and being outdoors generally as a gentleman should, with a certain nonchalance. He is determined and single-minded in everything he does, being generally despised as the sledge-hammer type, hard as iron and dull. He is seen as a thoroughly urban type for whom the simple joys of country house living are meaningless.

His rival in love, Despencer, is everything that he is not – young, athletic, elegant, adorable in the right sort of way and full of those very same social graces the lack of which condemns Maitland to the margins of any light-hearted company. He can talk feelingly and pleasantly on any topic, be it weather or books or people, and though he is something of a weathercock in his interests, having a new enthusiasm every week, his easy charm and appropriate sentiments win over even the hardest sceptics. He is also a true sportsman, loving the outdoors and sports in the properly light-hearted way and has a befitting tan to prove it. Needless to say, all these qualities have endeared him to the girl whose heart Maitland is trying to win.

Before Maitland can prove his mettle and his rival expose his ineffectuality, we are given the reasons for Maitland's ostensible lack of gentlemanly accomplishments. Differently from the company he is forced to keep to have a chance of seeing the girl at various country houses, his is not inherited wealth, though he is of noble birth. Having lost his father, and any financial support, only after a year at a public school, at fourteen he was forced to go to work in a bank and prepare for university by studying independently. Scraping and saving

and working hard at his books, he managed to win an Oxford scholarship and get a degree from an obscure college where his social life was non-existent for lack of funds. To a person more mature than his years, the organized games looked childish and his fellow students' pretensions to knowledge about the country life ridiculous, for he had worked in the fields in summer and had bought and trained a racehorse with his first money. Selling the horse enabled him to finish off his education and go on to London, where he slaved away in an office in the docks for meagre pay until the owner of his firm decided to retire from business and handed over the concern for him to run. Being a nobleman, he had no practical knowledge of business and had to work hard to acquire it to keep the company afloat. Having made his fortune, he decided to give in to his natural inclination and enter politics, a more fitting occupation for a member of his class and its turn of mind. So he has managed to acquire the education and wealth befitting his class, but the crucial years when his fellow aristocrats polish their manners and acquire proper prejudices by attending the right schools and socializing in the right circles, he had been forced to spend in the company of the hard-working middle class entrepreneurs for whom aristocratic nonchalance is not only meaningless but directly harmful to business.

That despite such setbacks Maitland is a proper gentleman and a truer sportsman than most, is demonstrated to the company, and the reader, by showing him in action. Idle conversation in the cosseted indoors while his true affinity had always been with the rugged outdoors had been Maitland's undoing but in confronting the fury of the elements he comes into his own.

Buchan is famous for having repeatedly drawn attention to the brittleness of civilisation in his novels. 'Fountainblue' gives us an early instance of this warning in a memorable dialogue between Maitland and the girl he loves about a hill-fox whose scream has startled them:

'It was a hill-fox,' said Maitland to Clara. 'They used to keep me awake at nights on the hill. They come and bark close to your ear and give you nightmare.'

The lady shivered. 'Thank Heaven for the indoors,' she said. 'Now, if I had been the daughter of one of your old Donalds of the Isles, I should have known that cry only too well. Wild nature is an excellent background, but give me civilisation in front.'

Maitland was looking into the wood. 'You will find it creeps far into civilisation if you look for it. There is a very narrow line between the warm room and the savage out-of-doors.'

'There are miles of luxuries,' the girl cried, laughing. 'People who are born in the wrong country have to hunt over half the world before they find their savagery. It is all very tame, but I love the tameness. You may call yourself primitive, Mr Maitland, but you are the most complex and modern of us all. What would Donald of the Isles have said to politics and the Stock Exchange?'

They had strolled back to the house. 'Nevertheless I maintain my belief,' said the man. 'You call it miles of rampart; I call the division a line; a thread, a sheet

of glass. But then, you see, you only know one side, and I only know the other.’
(CSS/II 33)

For a brief moment he will be given by Fate the illusion that, for him, too, the two sides of existence could be brought together, only to be cruelly reminded of his own true destiny.

The house party is taken in a steam boat out to the Isles of the Waves well beyond the headland and in the relaxed company on board Maitland, talking easily to a girl for the first time in his life, feels not excluded, but “one of the herd”, no longer alone, the leader, but “a devotee of humble pleasures” (CSS/II 38). The picnic on the island is a great success but Maitland, to whom the sea craft and weather-lore of his boyhood is returning, is disquieted by the signs of a gathering storm. It poses no danger to the steam boat but this is not the vehicle which by a woman’s caprice is to take them back. Clara sets her heart on going by the cutter, and the men are powerless to refuse her. Before the fatal voyage Maitland has a discussion with Clara which turns out to be portentous. The topic is the Ocean Quiet, meaning a lull of extraordinary peace in the midst of a raging storm that fishermen sometimes experience when out at sea and rarely return to tell about it, and when they do, they are no longer the persons they were. The Breathing of God has crushed them with His silence and changed them beyond recognition. The legend is accompanied by a pretty tale of a once powerful soldier, the King’s Warden of the Marches, who disappeared one day and lived as a hermit on one of the islands utterly forgotten by the world that had moved on, until the coming of the Vikings with a great fleet, when the hermit returned from his seclusion to unite the squabbling petty chiefs under his banner and defeat the invaders in the valley of Fountainblue. To Maitland’s comment:

That was a common enough thing in wild times. Men grew tired of murder and glory and waving banners, and wanted quiet to make their peace with their own souls. I should have thought the craving scarcely extinct yet. (CSS/II 40)

the girl laughingly replies that Maitland, as Secretary of State, might do a similar disappearing trick and then gloriously return to solve a burning problem. His entirely serious response is:

It is a sound idea, but the old device is too crude. However, it could be managed differently. Some day, when civilisation grows oppressive, Miss Clara, I will remember your advice. (Ibid.)

The cutter is launched and as Maitland had feared, the weather soon turns rough. Maitland, who has sailed these waters before, steers, leaving Clara in the care of his rival. Confident in his powers and relishing the rage of the elements, doing his proper job taking charge and leaving the “nervously-self-controlled” (CSS/II 42) Despencer to comfort the girl, Maitland slips into a dream-world of romance:

Suddenly he fell into one of the abstractions which had always dogged him through his strenuous life. His mind was clear, he chose his course with a certain precision, but the winds and waves had become to him echoes of echoes. Wet with spray and shifting his body constantly with the movement of the boat, it yet was all a phantasmal existence, while his thoughts were following an airy morrice in a fairyland world. The motto of his house, the canting motto of old reivers, danced in his brain – *‘Parmi ceu haut bois conduyrai m’amie’* – ‘Through the high woods I will conduct my love’ – and in a land of green forests, dragon-haunted, he was piloting Clara robed in a quaint medieval gown, himself in speckless plate-armour. His fancy fled through a score of scenes, sometimes on a dark heath, or by a lonely river, or among great mountains, but always the lady and her protector. (Ibid.)

The growing gale makes negotiating the archipelago at the entrance to the loch impossible and suddenly the voyage assumes a tragic aspect, needing all of Maitland’s expertise to get them out of the storm alive. He alone knows about a current which could take them to the nearest island and if the one jumping-off moment is missed before the cutter hits the rocks, it would take them out into the Atlantic and sure death. He takes the girl with him when he jumps and tells Despencer to follow but the latter does not. Having taken the girl safely to dry land, Maitland goes back for Despencer and sees him still drifting helplessly in the cutter, making feeble efforts to steer. When the cutter drifts closer, he rushes into the water, pins himself to a rock-wall and grabs hold of Despencer when the man finally finds courage to jump overboard, dragging his listless, half-fainting rival up the cliff-face, inch by painful inch. Carrying him to safety and seeing the girl’s reaction to Despencer’s condition, which is nothing more serious than a sprained ankle and fatigue which the girl chooses to treat as a mortal sickness, and her infinite trust but absolute indifference to himself, he feels his illusory palace of glass crash around his ears. After a moment of intense anguish, he suppresses his jealousy “as he had conquered all other feelings of whose vanity he was assured” (CSS/II 46) and sets about the manly task of organizing their rescue. The bitter comedy of the situation strikes him, “the lost lady, the mistress for him of all romance and generous ambition” bending lovingly over the man “he had pulled out of the deep in peril of his body” (ibid.). Leaving her to minister to him, he makes for the headland to light a fire to guide the rescue and as he sits there tending the fire the Ocean Quiet comes to him, an ethereal peace descending on the world around him which seems to lift him up and above the world, “the mingled ecstasy and grief of loneliness of soul” (CSS/II 48). The following passages are worth quoting in full, for in them we find the creed which sustains Buchan’s lonely dreamers as they go forth in life in search of their ideal, their conduct and sacrifices incomprehensible to outsiders yet leading them down their own path of honour.

Surely the great silence was now upon the world. But it was an evil presage, for all who sailed into it were homeless wanderers for ever after. Ah well! he had always been a wanderer, and the last gleam of home had been left behind, where by the firelight in the cold cranny a girl was crooning over her lover.

His past, his monotonous, brilliant past, slipped by with the knotless speed of a vision. He saw a boy, haunted with dreams, chafing at present delights, clutching evermore at the faint things of fancy. He saw a man, playing with the counters which others played with, fighting at first for bare existence and then for power and the pride of life. Success came over his path like a false dawn, but he knew in his heart that he had never sought it. What was that remote ineffable thing he had followed? Here in the quiet of the shadowy waters he had the moment of self-revelation which comes to all, and hopes and dim desires seemed to stand out with the clearness of accomplished facts. There had always been something elect and secret at the back of his fiercest ambitions. The ordinary cares of men had been to him but little things to be played with; he had won by despising them; casting them from him, they had fallen into the hollow of his hand. And he had held them a little, finding his reward in his work, and in a certain alertness and freshness of spirit which he had always cherished. There is a story of island-born men who carry into inland places and the streets of cities the noise of sea-water in their ears, and hear continually the tern crying and the surf falling. So from his romantic boyhood this man had borne an arrogance towards the things of the world which had given him a contemptuous empire over a share of them. As he saw the panorama of his life no place or riches entered into it, but only himself, the haggard, striving soul, growing in power, losing, perhaps in wisdom. And then, at the end of the way, death, to shrivel the power to dust, and with the might of his sunbeam to waken to life the forgotten world of the spirit.

In the hush he seemed to feel the wheel and the drift of things, the cosmic order of nature. He forgot the weariness and his plashing clothes as he put more wood on the beacon and dreamed into the night. The pitiless sea, infinite, untamable, washing the Poles and hiding Earth's secrets in her breast, spoke to him with a far-remembered voice. The romance of the remote isles, the homes of his people, floating still in a twilight of old story, rose out of the darkness. His life, with its routine and success, seemed in a moment hollow, a child's game; unworthy of a man. The little social round, the manipulation of half-truths, the easy victories over fools – surely this was not the task for him. He was a dreamer, but a dreamer with an iron hand; he was scarcely in the prime of life; the world was wide and his chances limitless. One castle of cards had already been overthrown; the Ocean Quiet was undermining another. He was sick of domesticity of every sort – of town, of home, of civilization. The sad elemental world was his, the fury and the tenderness of nature, the peace of the wilds which old folk had called the Breathing of God. *'Parmi ceu haut bois conduyrai m'amie'* – this was still his motto, to carry untarnished to the end an austere and beautiful dream. His little ambition had been but shreds and echoes and shadows of this supreme reality. And his love had been but another such simulacrum; for what he had sought was no foolish, laughing girl, but the Immortal Shepherdess,

who, singing the old songs of youth, drives her flocks to the hill in the first dewy dawn of the world. (CSS/II 48–49)

The fear of domesticity, of slackness and softness of any kind in man, given here an intensely poetic form, was a fashionable and topical concern at the turn of the century, having had much to do with alarm at the growing power of Britain's rivals on the world arena, the Empire's possibly inadequate response to this, the lack of properly trained manpower to administer and defend it, or even hold on to it. The ideal held up to combat this erosion of confidence, both by popular literature and the public schools, was the warrior-patriot who would scorn the comforts of suburbia to go out to do his racial duty by nobly laying down his life for Britain's expansion into the far corners of the earth. (Mangan 1986: 116–122)

Maitland's response to his personal tragedy is to do exactly this. Having after his night's meditations acquired the mien and aspect of "a Crusader" (CSS/II 50), he gives up his post in the government and accepts an African governorship in a remote location, baffling everybody in society by throwing away, as they see it, a brilliant career for a whim of a girl.

His true worth and stature are put into the correct perspective only four years later by his successor in that governorship, he himself having perished leading an expedition into the interior to protect his northern frontier. Building the colony virtually from scratch, he has carved out a new country for the Empire with such discretion and determination that people "accepted his results like a gift from Providence" (CSS/II 52). The accolade he receives from his successor is again worth quoting in full, for it gives him his peers' belated recognition, in most elevated terms, that he was indeed a gentleman, possessing the kind of inborn grace and authority which is the mark of true gentility:

Most people, I think, misunderstood him. I was one of his nearest friends, and I only knew bits of the man. For one thing – and I hate to use the vulgar word – he was the only aristocrat I ever heard of. Our classes are three-fourths of them of yesterday's growth, without tradition, character, manner, or any trait of an aristocracy. And the few, who are nominally of the blood, have gone to seed in mind, or are spoilt by coarse marriages, or, worst of all, have the little trifling superior airs of incompetence. But he, he had the most transcendent breeding in mind and spirit. He had no need for self-assertion, for his most casual acquaintances put him at once in a different class from all other men. He had never a trace of vulgar ideal; men's opinions, worldly honour, the common pleasures of life, were merely degrees of the infinitely small. And yet he was no bloodless mystic. If race means anything, he had it to perfection. Dreams and fancies to him were realities, while facts were the shadows which he made dance as it pleased him.

The truth is, that he was that rarest of mortals, the iron dreamer. He thought in æons and cosmic cycles, and because of it he could do what he pleased in life. We call a man practical if he is struggling in the crowd with no knowledge of his whereabouts, and yet in our folly we deny the name to the clear-sighted man

who can rule the crowd from above. /.../ He found work where there could be small hope of honour or reward, but many a chance for a hero. And I am sure that he was happy, and that it was the longed-for illumination that dawned on him with the bullet which pierced his heart. (CSS/II 52–53)

The mystique of omniscient manliness which the passage radiates was, as J. Rutherford has pointed out, a response to the era of insecurity between 1870 and the First World War when the imperial mythology of heroic endeavour posited a hero with the famous stiff upper lip who transcended the insecurities and vicissitudes of modern masculinity to assume a cosmic dimension. Nothing he encountered was beyond his knowledge, his mastery over his environment was complete; whatever odds were stacked against him, his boundless confidence in his own powers carried all before him. As Rutherford has shown, despite all the bravado, there was “a frisson of unease” in the strenuous exertions of the imperial hero, a compulsion to escape “the idleness and comfort of domesticity”, which is appositely exemplified by Captain Scott’s last letter to his wife with an injunction concerning the upbringing of his son. (1997: 12) The most famous failed explorer of the Edwardian era, who wanted to challenge gods but perished due to having overlooked the little practicalities of life, enjoins her to make him a proper man:

Above all, he must guard and you must guard him against indolence. Make him a strenuous man. I had to force myself into being strenuous, as you know – had always an inclination to be idle. /.../ How much better has it been than lounging in too great a comfort at home. (Quoted *ibid.*)

The evangelical zeal of Calvinism, Rutherford suggests, with its promise of a transfigured life and its emphasis on leadership through example, imposed “a vigorous moral code of manliness” on British empire-builders (*ibid.*: 13). J. Tosh has drawn attention to a growing insecurity of men in their masculine identity in the generation that grew up after 1860, “which manifested itself in a flight from domesticity, a growing disparagement of the ‘feminine’, a readiness to go abroad and an increasing refusal amongst late Victorian men to marry”, a reaction against the pronounced domesticity of the mid-Victorian years. (1991: 68) The idolized mother presiding over the home and the relegation of manliness to the outside sphere of work had feminized the language of emotions concerning pleasure, need or vulnerability – these were now seen as confined strictly to the domestic sphere. The paterfamilias and his sons, fighting their battles in the public arena outside the safe confines of the home, had to guard themselves against the excessive influence of this feminine world which might undermine their vigour. Idealized and demonized at once, the Victorian matriarch was charged with the responsibility of bridling the intensity of her maternal or conjugal love, the overabundance of which was seen as capable of harming her menfolk’s manliness with its destructive intensity. The mother and son bond, especially, was to be broken early to safeguard the boy from the

“thralldom of her femininity” (Rutherford 1997: 20). The boarding schools provided an ideal solution to the problem of removing boys from harmful domesticity. Cut off from the love of their mothers, finding no comfort in emotionally distant and absent fathers, subjected to the rigours of the punitive regime of the school and raised in the moral atmosphere which denigrated any show of weakness, the Late Victorian boys were forced to create their own emotional economy. To quote Rutherford again:

In childhood, solitude created anxiety, in adulthood it became a virtue. In his aloneness the man imagines himself freed of social relations and untied from all emotional dependency on women. But, in spite of adopting the defensive ego boundaries and manly postures prescribed him, he could never fully repress the trauma of maternal loss, nor succeed in establishing an unambiguous adult heterosexuality. (Ibid.: 23)

Such men tended to avoid sexual relationships with women and lived exclusively among men, condemned in their outlook to perpetual adolescence. Emotionally repressed and sexually confused, they found their only solace in the brave bright days of their boyhood when life had been simple and untroubled by the sexual demands of women. They retreated into their own past, trying to recapture the pure joy of living and a sense of destiny, but found only sentimental fatalism and the death-wish. (Ibid.: 26) This kind of retreat into a personal dream-world, which is fully attained at the moment of death, is illustrated by the next short story about a successful and accomplished young man whose central motivating force in life is his childhood dream.

Colin Raden ('The Far Islands')

We meet Colin when he is five years old. A motherless boy, whose father is “busy elsewhere” (CSS/I 230), he is brought to his ancestral estate in the northwest of Scotland to spend his holiday away from London, for his health is delicate. He comes to Kinlochuna for six lonely summers in the company of his French nurse and the place lays its spell on him.

His favourite place is the beach where he builds sand castles in the shape of the old family tower, peopling them with knights and ladies and fighting out the old battles of the clan, for his ancestry is long and impressive and has that dreamy quality in it with the Scots call ‘douce’. Indeed, ancestral blood is stirring in him and is about to determine his destiny.

There is a family legend that a distant ancestor, Bran the Blessed, knowing he was dying, bestowed various gifts on his sons. To the eldest he gave the gift of winning speech and he became a scholar, his descendants occupying high places in the Church. To the second son he left his battle-axe and he chose the warrior’s path, becoming an ancestor of the first king of the Scots. But to Colin,

his youngest and dearest, he left no gift, but whispered a word in his ear and laid a finger on his eyelids. While his brothers left the inhospitable shore, he stayed on and in time his descendant, also Colin by name, built on the rocky peninsula stretching far into the Atlantic a mighty tower. He was a famous sea-rover but cursed with a habit of fantasy and found his end sailing into the sunset in search of a mysterious land in the west. His grandson Colin, a bard, led a wandering life and disappeared in middle-age, to be found dead on the distant island of Cuna in extreme old age, kneeling on the shore, his arms stretched westwards, contrary to the teaching of his Church. His descendants took the name of Raden and settled further inland, building a new house at Kinlochuna. They entered the service of the King and led stormy and noble lives and if not cut down in their prime, undertook those mad western voyages which were the peculiarity of the family. Some were later found dead on the shores of Cuna, while others sailed "straight out of the ken of mortals" (CSS/I 229). The family also possessed a strain of noble self-sacrifice, having its share of crusaders and embracers of lost causes, joining the Jacobites both in '15 and '45. The Union brought opportunities further south and the blood-line soon mingled with the English till the sons of the family were Scots only in name, having become "the common over-civilised type" (ibid.), handsome and graceful, and only once in a generation would one of them revert to the rugged northern type.

Our hero Colin grows up a model English gentleman. Everything in his career is as exemplary as it could possibly be. At prep school he is phenomenal at games, worshipped by juniors and a favourite with masters. A born leader on the cricket-ground and the football-field, in private he nevertheless exhibits the nervous, sensitive manners of the would-be recluse. At a famous public school he is the idol of the school, quickly making it to the Eight and in his last year becoming Captain of Boats. Having a good reputation for character, in his studies he progresses less well, for his mind seems to be elsewhere. At Oxford his reputation has preceded him and he quickly justifies it, rowing for three years in the winning Eight, becoming a captain of his college boats and then the O.U.B.C. Having grown to his full strength, he is a splendid figure of a man, athletic, elegant, extraordinarily handsome, with charming manners but also rather diffident and exclusive and, though most distinguished a personage, lacking close friends. There is no trace of Scottishness either in his character or speech and his fellow Scots put him down as 'denationalised and degenerate' (CSS/I 236). In his studies he again does less well, for the writings of other men hold little interest for him, his every waking moment being filled with an all-consuming private dream.

It first comes to him during his boyhood holidays on the beach when he sees a shining pathway running past the farthest islands to the horizon in the west and there in the mist something like an island. As he grows older, the dream grows more concrete, a boat appearing on the shore to take him across, the island acquiring a well of sweet water and smelling sweetly of apple-trees. In

time it also acquires a name, the Island of Apple-trees, which he is delighted to discover is the Celtic equivalent of the Greek Hesperides and Arthur's Avalon, a place where heroes and princes live out their second lives.

Meanwhile he has graduated from the university and entered Society where again he is extremely popular, especially with girls and match-making mothers, but fails to live up to his promise, despite his kindness and charm soon developing the reputation of a recluse. At ease and a leader among men, he finds relating to women extremely difficult. They actually annoy him for they so upset his psychic balance that it interferes with his dream which he cherishes more than anything else in life, attaining the island having become his single-minded quest.

He has joined the Guards and in due course he is sent out to fight in one of the little imperial wars in an unspecified desert. He is living a dual life now, the fragments of the dream-world beginning to intrude into his waking life. A bout of desert fever brings the vision even nearer and fulfilment seems at hand, as the mist which had always obscured the clear view of the island seems to be clearing.

He is a reconnaissance officer and, being barely recovered, he is sent out to scour the foothills above the river in preparation for the night-march. Their body of horse is ambushed in a narrow pass and Colin is hit by a bullet. In the few short minutes before death comes he completes his quest:

He felt as in a condensed moment of time the heat, the desert smell, the dust in his eyes and throat, while he leaned helplessly forward on his horse's mane. Then the world vanished for him. ... The boat was rocking under him, the oars in his hand. He pulled and it moved, straight, arrow-like towards the forbidden shore. As if under a great wind the mist furled up and fled. Scents of pines, of apple-trees, of great fields of thyme and heather, hung about him; the sound of wind in a forest, of cool waters falling in showers, of old moorland music, came thin and faint with an exquisite clearness. A second and the boat was among the surf, its gunwale ringed with white foam, as it leaped to the still waters beyond. Clear and deep and still the water lay, and then the white beaches shelved downward, and the boat grated on the sand. He turned, every limb alert with a strange new life, crying out words which had shaped themselves on his lips and which an echo seemed to catch and answer. There was the green forest before him, the hills of peace, the cold white waters. With a passionate joy he leaped on the beach, his arms outstretched to this new earth, this light of the world, this old desire of the heart – youth, rapture, immortality. (CSS/I 244)

Graves ('No-Man's Land')

A different dream governs the existence of Mr Graves, an Oxford scholar and explorer in the short story 'No Man's Land'. He is fascinated with the prehistoric cultures of the North, especially the Picts, and has the (mis)fortune to meet the object of his scientific quest.

The 1890s, when the story was written, was the decade of the Celtic revival. As a movement it was strongest in Ireland, but Scotland and Wales came in for their share of excitement. Enthusiasts saw the downtrodden Celt awakening at last to challenge Teutonic supremacy. In the words of one of them,

[t]he Celt in Britain, like Mr Burne Jones's enchanted princess, has lain silent for ages in an enforced long sleep; but the spirit of the country, pushing aside the weeds and briars of privilege and caste, has set free the sleeper at last... (G. Allen quoted in Jackson 1950: 148)

As Mr Graves is about to discover in this tale of supernatural horror, the prehistoric inhabitants of Scotland have returned not only in spirit but in their physical form as well. Spiritualism, the occult, the uncanny in general enjoyed tremendous popularity at the turn of the century, one branch of adventure literature in this age of aristocratic globe-trotting exploring the possibility of pockets of primitive civilizations surviving in distant locations to be accidentally discovered by modern adventurers. The Gothic version, inspired by the national preoccupation with degeneracy, tried to visualize the consequences of the eruption of primitive, atavistic forces into the soft, civilized world.

Mr Graves is a conventional modern gentleman, a bona fide sportsman and an expert of the ancient cultures of the North, his special interest being the Celtic elements in the Eddic songs. He speaks a smattering of Gaelic and has travelled widely, exploring the Celtic fringe of the British Isles, the whole of Scandinavia, including Iceland and even Finland. A seasoned mountaineer, who has tackled the steeper cliff-faces of the Alps, he is in the habit of spending his spring vacation tramping in the Scottish moorland. We meet him when he is setting out on yet another expedition into the wild reaches of the Allermuir, pondering on the early inhabitants of the hills he is climbing. He idly indulges in a fantasy of discovery, picturing the impenetrable mountain fastnesses, which still bear Pictish names, peopled by the savage survivors of a more primitive world waiting to be discovered by an intrepid scholar.

His host is a lonely shepherd of Farawa, living with his sister in complete isolation in these remote hills. The shepherd has lately been much annoyed by the mysterious slaughter of his sheep and strange creatures lurking around his cottage at night, the proof of their presence being a flint arrow-head he has found next to the carcasses of his sheep. Intrigued, but not scared, Mr Graves sets out to explore the Scarts of the Muneraw where the Brownies, the Little Men of Gaelic legend, have been sighted. He loses his way in the mist and

comes face to face with mysterious creatures, little squat dark savages covered in skins who take him prisoner. He is taken to their cave and can communicate with his captors using his fragmentary Gaelic. They turn out to be Picts and the scholar in him rejoices when he hears their tale of survival through centuries:

I forgot the horror of the place, and thought only of the fact that here before me was the greatest find that scholarship had ever made. I was precipitated into the heart of the past. Here must be the fountainhead of all legends, the chrysalis of all beliefs. /.../ In that strange conversation I heard – in fragments and suggestions – the history of the craziest survival the world has ever seen. I heard of the struggles with invaders, preserved as it were in a sort of shapeless poetry. There were bitter words against the Gaelic oppressor, bitterer words against the Saxon stranger, and for a moment ancient hatreds flared into life. Then there came the tale of the hill-refuge, the morbid hideous existence preserved for centuries amid a changing world. I heard fragments of old religions, primeval names of god and goddess, half-understood by the Folk, but to me the key to a hundred puzzles. Tales which survive to us in broken disjointed riddles were intact here in living form. I lay on my elbow and questioned feverishly. At any moment they might become morose and refuse to speak. Clearly it was my duty to make the most of a brief good fortune. (CSS/I 202–203)

His joy quickly evaporates when he realizes that he is to be ritually murdered and he makes a heroic escape from the cave. The Picts pursue him to the shepherd's cottage and he barely escapes with his life. Badly frightened, he leaves the next day, urging the shepherd and his sister to go with him. They refuse and he travels alone back to Oxford but the great panic which has seized him refuses to go away, even in the cosy civility of Oxford.

At length his own cowardice starts to nag him and the explorer in him is exasperated that what would amount to the greatest discovery of the century, or even millennium, with attendant wealth and fame, would go to waste due to his mortal terror. After lengthy and agonized soul-searching he decides that the only manly thing to do would be to confront his fears head-on and return to the cave for scientific proof of the Picts' existence.

His second visit to the cave acquires a tinge of romance through the involvement of a woman. It appears that the shepherd's sister has meanwhile been kidnapped by the Picts and this gives a new purpose to our scholar's quest, which had so far been exclusively concerned with the more abstract notions of scientific progress and the general march of humanity. What had been a rather self-centred mission now acquires an additional dimension of mercy.

He allows himself to be captured and taken to the cave where he indeed finds the shepherd's sister. As midsummer is approaching, the Picts plan to sacrifice both of them to their gods. This provides our scholar with an opportunity both to conquer his fear and also chivalrously save the woman. His terror forgotten, he cheerfully sets about his task. When given the knife to kill the woman at the altar, he sets her free, then single-handedly takes on the Picts'

assault, fights bravely, aided by the raging storm which partly destroys the cave and makes possible their escape, and finally grapples with the last surviving Pict in single combat. He is found by the search party the next day lying on a ledge of rock, unconscious and gravely ill.

His real struggle is yet in store for him, for the scientific world treats his discovery with scorn, ascribing everything to the religious madness of the peasants and his own credulity. Courageously he makes attempt after attempt, despite his ruined health, to reach the cave again, his fear completely gone, but the adventure has sapped his bodily strength and he is unable to seek further proof of the Picts' existence. His career destroyed, his health broken, his lives out his remaining brief years practically a hermit and dies of heart failure, still a young man. His tale is published by a friend who offers this "amazing romance" (CSS/I 225) to the general public in the hope that Mr Graves's heroic struggle in the name of scientific enquiry might find due recognition.

Lewis Haystoun (*The Half-Hearted*)

Buchan's first book-length treatment of a modern gentleman, who also unites in himself the lonely dreamer, the eternal wanderer, the crusader, the explorer, the empire-builder and the modern courtly lover is to be found in his novel *The Half-Hearted*, which he wrote during his Oxford days and which makes a concerted effort to bring together the fashionable prejudices of his circle of upper middle class university friends (some are mentioned in the dedication), his perception of high society life (now that he had entered the country house circuit), topical anxieties about the safety of imperial borders and the Carlylean Chivalry of Work.

Lewis Haystoun, Lord of Etterick, is the last of his line. We meet him just when he has returned home from a four-year trip abroad and is planning to settle down on his country estate in the Scottish Lowlands and enter politics. His character as a good landlord is established right away and a little dialogue with the local doctor gives us his family background and identifies a possible weakness in his line which will prove fatal to his hopes and will ultimately have to be refuted by his final heroic action on the North-West Frontier in India.

Lewis is an orphan, his mother having died at his birth and his father six years later. Despite a brilliant career at school and Oxford, of which we hear later, he has always been a loner. Though having many acquaintances and scores of sporting friends, having been a first-rate scholar and "a tremendous swell", "a sort of universal genius", he seems to have been rather too "exclusive" and intolerant of less talented people than himself to have been really popular (HH 31). Where he specially excelled was sports and he left Oxford with the reputation of a great man of action, one of his fellow students comparing him extravagantly to Raleigh and Henri IV, great chivalric heroes in

the Victorian canon of pertinent literature. Yet the good doctor upon meeting our hero, who has spent four rigorous years exploring the Himalayas, finds it expedient to warn him against a danger, “a special disease” (HH 7) lurking in his blood which was his father’s undoing and might now that he is entering a more settled period of life, also threaten him. It appears that the Haystouns have been “highstrung, finicking people, on whom idleness sits badly” (ibid.), the last sorry example having been his father, who started out as a sportsman but then opted for a quiet life, lost interest in things, grew irritable and shy. The reason for such a decline is too easy a life which makes men “over-cultured and enervated” (ibid.) and they lose touch with the realities of life. The remedy for such a condition would be hard work, and this brings us to a number of Victorian and Late-Victorian concerns of which the novel serves as a good illustration.

The dangers of idleness and domesticity have already been touched upon above and they are one of the central concerns of this novel as well, as we shall see, but the broader and even more topical issue referred to here is ‘efficiency’ in relation to the Empire, especially its feared lack, which Lewis with his heroic behaviour will refute, but not before he has exhibited the very symptoms of the condition which might threaten the sustainability of Britain’s greatness should Lewis’s condition, by implication quite wide-spread among the potential rulers of Empire, remain untreated.

The novel appeared in print in 1900 when the South African War had just laid bare the inherent weaknesses in the imperial war machine. In one week in December 1899 the Boers had inflicted a series of humiliating defeats on the British, in terms of prestige the worst in the whole century. In the end Britain had to put into the field almost half a million men to defeat a guerrilla force not bigger than the population of two English counties. The question of how would Britain fare should a military conflict involve one of the great powers was urgently posed. J. R. Seeley’s bestselling *The Expansion of England* had in 1883 called for a tighter federation of the white settler colonies to withstand the imperial pretensions of other emerging industrial nations, a call picked up by ‘Liberal Imperialists’ at the end of the century. They urged for reforms which would make British institutions more ‘efficient’ to cope with the challenge from Britain’s competitors. The poor physical condition of the recruits to the army also sparked off calls for improved military fitness, for as Lord Rosebery said, the Empire needed “an imperial race – a race vigorous and industrious and intrepid” (quoted in Reynolds 1996: 69), not to meet the fate of the Romans who had lost their empire, as General Baden-Powell was to point out a little later, for having been “wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them” (quoted ibid.).

The remedy to counter fears of national degeneracy and the loss of vigour had in mid-century been offered by Carlyle and other middle-class prophets of earnestness who had fought enervating religious doubt by a Gospel of Work

which lifted the worker, whatever his field of action, to the same elevated plane with the military man, both fighting like crusaders in a benighted world for the advancement of civilization and the spread of true faith. *The Half-Hearted* frequently echoes with the Carlylean injunctions as to the proper way of living one's life, the very first dialogue in the book positing in no uncertain terms the hard ideal towards which Lewis should strive.

Aristocratic nonchalance and middle-class earnestness clash the moment Lewis and the doctor meet. As befits a gentleman, Lewis modestly downplays his extraordinary expedition to the unexplored frontier regions of Kashmir, of which the doctor has been reading in the papers and praises him for, by a characteristic insistence on aristocratic fair play:

But people made a great deal more of that than it deserved. It was very simple, and I had every chance. Some day I will go out and do the same thing again with no advantages, and if I come back you may praise me then. (HH 6)

to be rewarded by a stern middle-class admonition:

Right Lewie. A bare game and no chances is the rule of war. (Ibid.)

From their dialogue we learn that though Lewis intends to take up the duties of the lord of the manor, he feels an inner lack of usefulness, that he has not found his work. For earnest Victorians there was no greater sin than idleness which played right into the Devil's hands and the doctor immediately recognizes the danger signs:

Then things are serious, Lewie, and I, as your elder, should give advice; but confound it, my dear, I cannot think what it should be. Life has been too easy for you, a great deal too easy. You want a little of the salt and iron of the world. (HH 6)

To Lewis's query as to what cure there could be for a man like him, with sufficient money but no profession, to prevent stagnation, the doctor replies:

None, but the man himself can find many. The chief is that he be conscious of his danger, and on the watch against it. As a last expedient I should recommend a second course of travel. (HH 6-7)

As it turns out, this is exactly what Lewis will ultimately do to find his true work.

As they approach the village where the doctor lives, a shepherd strides past them on his way home after a long day's work and this inspires the doctor to lecture Lewis on the Carlylean meaning of work:

'There, you see,' said the Doctor, nodding his head towards the retreating figure, 'there's a man who in his own way knows the secret of life. Most of his days are spent in dreary monotonous toil. He is for ever wrestling with the weather and getting scorched and frozen, and the result is that the sparse enjoyments of his life are relished with a rare gusto. He sucks his pipe of an evening with a zest

which the man who lies on his back all day smoking knows nothing about. So, too, the labourer who hoes turnips for one and sixpence the day. They know the arduousness of life, which is a lesson we must all learn sooner or later. You people who have been coddled and petted must learn it, too; and for you it is harder to learn, but pleasanter in the learning, because you stand above the bare need of things, and have leisure for the adornments. We must all be fighters and strugglers, Lewie, and it is better to wear out than rust out.' (HH 8)

That Lewis's condition, despite his doubts, is not hopeless is testified by their little exchange on parting. They meet a little urchin whose life Lewis had saved soon after home-coming by pulling him out of a stream the moment he was on the point of being swallowed up by a treacherous whirlpool. Lewis, with characteristic understatement, downplays the danger he himself was in, but the doctor recognizes for our benefit both the extraordinary bravery of the act of rescue and the laudable modesty of the rescuer.

As this book, too, is about self-discovery and a romance of knight errantry, a lady should enter the game at the crucial point and turn the hero's life upside down. What lends additional interest to the love story in *The Half-Hearted*, is the social origin of the heroine. Instead of the traditional aristocratic lady placed way above the hero in the social hierarchy, so that he could aspire to raise himself both morally and socially to be her equal, Alice Wishart is, being a middle class woman, Lewis's inferior socially, if not financially, and could culturally as well be from another planet, so different are their worlds.

Throughout the century new money had striven for acceptance by the old and as aristocratic fortunes declined and plutocrats and industrialists prospered, class boundaries were relaxed to facilitate the merger of old blood and new money. Lewis, being still wealthy, does not need the money but falls sincerely in love with Alice, and she with him. However, Fate, in the form of insurmountable cultural differences, bars their union. Courtly love, as shown in this novel, could almost be viewed as a parody, were it not treated with utter seriousness by Buchan himself, so ironical is the clash of middle-class prejudice, both Alice's and Buchan's own, and the conventions and clichés of romance.

As D. Powell has shown, life expectations of the Late Victorian and Edwardian aristocratic and middle class women, despite frequent intermarriages between the classes, were still treated as different. While aristocrats on their country estates led what could be called 'spacious' lives, the middle classes' experience was strictly 'suburban', with all the attendant consequences. (Powell 1996: 69–70) When Alice is introduced to the reader, we get the full scale of conventional prejudices which the aristocracy, and those who sided with them, levelled against the money-making upper middle classes, reproduced with all the sincerity of a recent convert to them by an author whose own background until recently had been predominantly urban and lower middle class.

The negative stereotyping of the middle classes by those who could lead more 'spacious' lives had begun with their rise to social prominence. As D. Cannadine (2000: 71, 119) has shown, the successful middle-class self-promotion which led to their recognition as an economic force by parliamentary reforms, was accompanied by condemnation and ridicule, the entrepreneurs being written off as selfish and vulgar parvenus, ill-mannered, under-bred, socially awkward, obsessed with status and gaining an entrance into Society. Their defining characteristic was supposed to be guilt for their ill-gotten gains and if they refused to feel guilty, they were condemned as vulgar and immoral. The Tory peers, especially, reacted to middle-class taunts that they were effete parasites by disparaging the plutocrats as "greedy, rootless, unpatriotic, self-indulgent, hypocritical, unscrupulous adventurers" (ibid.: 120). This "scandal-mongering stereotyping" was "a pronounced feature of Edwardian political rhetoric" (ibid.), the middle classes, among other things, being blamed for the diminishing vigour of the nation. They were accused of having become "feeble, complacent and defeated" (ibid.) by resting on the laurels of their heroic predecessors who had initiated the Industrial Revolution and laid the foundations for the national greatness which was now being undermined by more successful competitors abroad. (Ibid.) Middle-class suburban existence came in for its share of hostile criticism so that Keble Howard, a representative of the new genre of light domestic novels set in the suburbia which came into being in the 1880s, wrote bitterly in 1909 in an open letter to *The Times*, which he addressed to his fictional heroes:

You confided to me, when you first made your appearance, that you were pained because certain people insisted upon regarding you as satirical figures, and the comedy in which you played as a sneer at the suburbs. It is so conventional to scoff at the suburbs /.../ To write of the middle classes, in short, is a confession of mediocrity. /.../ [T]he middle classes are the mainstay of England, but venture to write about them, save in the blessed spirit of satire, and artistically you are forthwith damned. (Quoted in Breward 1999: 195)

Middle-class suburban existence was viewed as narrow and provincial, bound to sap man's vigour, Buchan himself expressing this conventional prejudice of the time when he speaks in his autobiography of his youthful terror of the prospect of having to earn his bread as a lower middle-class clerk, that typical inhabitant of the suburbs, which for him were then "a synonym for a dreadful life of commercial drudgery without daylight or hope" (MHD 46).

Alice is first introduced to the reader in most unflattering terms, and though she undergoes a partial transformation during her stay in the country, her initial prejudices retain their full force and prevent her union with Lewis. This is her first visit to a country-house and for her an introduction to a wholly new world:

To Alice Wishart the country was a novel one and the prospect before her an unexplored realm of guesses. The daughter of a great merchant, she had lived

most of her days in the ugly environs of a city, save for such time as she had spent at the conventional schools. She had never travelled; the world of men and things was merely a name to her, and a girlhood, lonely and brightened chiefly by the companionship of books, had not given her self-confidence. She had casually met Lady Manorwater at some political meeting in her father's house, and the elder woman had taken a strong liking to the quiet, abstracted child. Then came an invitation to Glenavelin, accepted gladly yet with much fear and searching of heart. Now, as she looked out on the shining mountain land, she was full of delight that she was about to dwell in the heart of it. Something of pride, too, was present, that she was to be the guest of a great lady, and see something of a life which seemed infinitely remote to her provincial thoughts. But when her journey drew near its end she was foolishly nervous and scanned the platform with anxious eyes. (HH 10)

It becomes painfully obvious that she does not fit in with the relaxed country-house set because of her middle-class earnestness. Being not an aristocrat born, she lacks what has been perceived ever since the renaissance as the class's most precious virtue, that of inborn grace, and the concomitant nonchalance, which lends charm even to the most mundane sort of social intercourse. Her strict evangelical background forbids any levity and she is scandalized by the light-hearted way serious matters like enthusiasm, business, politics and philanthropy are playfully dismissed by her hostess:

To Alice the speech was the breaking of idols. Competence, responsibility were words she had been taught to revere, and to hear them light-heartedly disavowed seemed an upturning of the foundation of things. You will perceive that her education had not included that valuable art, the appreciation of the flippant. (HH 13)

The last comment is rather clumsy but hits the nail on the head, so to speak. Buchan is as blunt with Alice's architectural taste which, "accustomed to the vulgarity of suburban villas with Italian campaniles" (an interesting touch this, reminding us of the tremendous cultural influence Prince Albert's Osborne House had on the taste of the day, his Italianate residence on the Isle of Wight with its distinctive campaniles having spewed forth a host of town and country residences, town halls, railway stations, and seaside hotels all over the Empire (Girouard 1990: 147)), finds in the old baronial keep and the pastoral landscape around it a new wonderland. Brought up "in an atmosphere of commerce" (HH 22), in a home where "everything was docketed and ordered" (HH 12), where regularity was virtue and every vice and misfortune attributed to its lack, she finds it difficult to shake off her doctrinaire and censorious attitude to her more light-minded hosts, despite her acclaimed book learning. L. Davidoff has pointed out that the strict ordering of time, throughout the day, the week, the year, which became such a pronounced feature of the Victorian society, may have owed its origin to the strict morality of middle-class homes, where a tight schedule was the handiest means of exerting control over the household and the

children. While the nobility, sure of their birthright, could occasionally flaunt conventions, the middle class, whose means were much more limited, sought to control its members' behaviour with an exactitude not seen since the heyday of religious and monastic orders. (1973: 34)

Alice's spiritual awakening comes, quite predictably, knowing Buchan, with her exposure to the meaning of aristocratic leisure combined with the joys of the open countryside. When she accidentally meets Lewis on the moors, his aristocratic shabbiness of dress is a revelation. The suburban gentleman was something of a dandy, making up for the lack of good tailoring by paying extraordinary, from the aristocrat's point of view, attention to the ephemeral outward details of his dress, thus earning the reputation of an effeminate and emasculated pleasure-seeker. (Breward 1999: 192–193) Now, seeing for the first time a true aristocratic sportsman in his native inhabitat, the men she had seen in her father's suburban home, "miracles of neatness" in their faultless suits, seem suddenly "atrocious" when compared to Lewis's magnificent casualness:

Alice for her part saw a strong, well-knit being, with a brown clean-shaven face, a straight nose, a delicate humorous mouth. He had large grey eyes, very keen, quizzical, and kindly. His raiment was disgraceful – an old knickerbocker suit with a ruinous Norfolk jacket, patched at the elbows and with leather at wrist and shoulder. Apparently he scorned the June sun, for he had no cap. His pockets seemed bursting with tackle and a discarded basket lay on the ground. The whole figure pleased her, its rude health, simplicity, disorder. (HH 26)

Though they fish together with perfect ease, conventions forgotten, for they have not been formally introduced, we learn that Lewis is habitually shy and unhappy with women and indeed their first day together ends in discord, for he refuses to play the polite cavalier and thus hurts the girl's feelings.

Though they fall passionately in love, this awkwardness on his part to take the relationship any further from the stage of easy and careless friendship persists, to the girl's acute discomfort and his own misery. The reason, as his friends tell us, is his modesty, which has always been one of the most highly prized chivalric virtues. His friend George, who knows that as a man Lewis is "really first class" (HH 42), also concedes that this quality might become a hindrance:

Lewis will be modest enough. He may have the pride of Lucifer at heart, but he would never show it. His fault is just this infernal modesty, which makes him shirk fighting some blatant ass or publishing his merits to the world. (HH 41–42)

This reticence will indeed serve to hide his best qualities from those who matter most – his beloved and his electorate. A case in point is the episode which is included to show Lewis as an excellent landlord and the traditional gentleman amateur who can compete as an equal, or almost, with any professional, should he desire to do so. It is shearing time for the sheep and he cheerfully joins the

clippers when visiting his tenants, expertly clipping away and exchanging good-natured badinage with his people, all of whom he knows by name or even nickname. Yet when Alice appears on the scene, he is quick to downplay his achievement. When they later get talking and Alice wants to draw him on his travels, he again refuses the opportunity to speak about himself, making light of the heroics of travel and posing laughingly as a man who is just thrilled by the adventure of the open road. For the truth that is slowly dawning on him, and his worried friends, is that he is starting to feel the pull of domesticity and is subconsciously fighting against it. The prospect of Lewis throwing his talents away by becoming domesticated abhors his friends, for they think that they know that playing a ‘good husband’ to some ‘good woman’ and the mere conscientious fulfilling of the duties of a country squire will for Lewis be no achievement but “a ghastly failure” (HH 42). Lewis himself is generally of the same opinion but the prospect of settling down with Alice is taking the colour out of his picture of himself as a romantic wanderer whose field of operation is the whole wide world:

The family of the Haystouns had ever a knack of fine sentiment. Fantastic, unpractical, they were gluttons for the romantic, the recondite, and the dainty. But now had come a breath of strong wind which rent the meshes of a philandering fancy. A very new and strange feeling was beginning to make itself known. He had come to think of Alice with the hot pained affection which makes the high mountains of the world sink for the time to a species of mole-hillock. She danced through his dreams and usurped all the paths of his ambition. Formerly he had thought of himself – for the man was given to self-portraiture – as the adventurer, the scorner of the domestic; now he struggled to regain the old attitude, but he struggled in vain. They ways were blocked, a slim figure was ever in view, and lo! when he blotted it from his sight the world was dark and the roads blind. For a moment he had lost his bearings on the sea of life. As yet the discomfiture was sweet, his confusion was a joy; and it is the first trace of weakness which we have seen in the man that he accepted the unsatisfactory with composure. (HH 65)

His trial by fire comes when he is asked by his mentor and best friend to stand as a parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party in his own constituency. He is in a double bind, for his sense of duty prevents him from disobliging a friend and yet he is not really interested in party politics, the more so now that he has given his word to his rival in love, and his opposite candidate, that he would not interfere with his chances. The sense of fair play is strong in him and prevents him from fighting his rival in earnest, having condemned himself to failure from the start for fear of displeasing Alice by entering the game against a man who shares her political convictions.

Mr Stocks, the radical candidate (the name is of course indicative of his mercantile mind), is Lewis’s dead opposite in everything. He is the caricature of the suburban middle class meritocrat, a man who has made a profession of

being a politician, takes it and himself extremely seriously and looks ridiculous in the part. We see him described with all the condescension of aristocratic prejudice, incongruously through the eyes of Alice who belongs to the same social class and whose father Mr Stocks knows well:

[He] was a striking figure, a man of about forty in appearance, tall and a little stout, with a rugged face which in some way suggested a picture of a prehistoric animal in an old natural history she had owned. The high cheek bones, large nose, and slightly protruding eyes had an unfinished air about them, as if their owner had escaped prematurely from a mould. A quantity of bushy black hair – which he wore longer than most men – enhanced the dramatic air of his appearance. It was a face full of vigour and a kind of strength, shrewd, a little coarse, and solemn almost to the farcical. (HH 15)

He has the over-elaborate manners of a gentleman not to the manner born, is nastily clever and loftily dismissive of both aristocratic dilettantes and their university education with all the bitterness of a self-taught, self-made man with a touch of a nonconformist fanatic. He is a “typical townsman” who carries with him wherever he goes “an atmosphere of urban dust and worry” (HH 31). He hungers for ostentation, exudes pompous self-importance and is secretly very keen on aristocratic pedigrees and property “for, democratic politician though he was, he looked always forward to the day when he should own a pleasant country property, and forget the troubles of life in the Nirvana of the respectable” (HH 32). He is over-bearing and crude, has no appreciation of the landscape or the meaning of sport and even less of the niceties of courtly love. He proposes marriage to Alice with the straightforwardness of a business deal and presses his suit relentlessly, yet not without the discretion of true love, until he gets her consent.

Lewis does badly in the contest also because he has the aristocrat’s hatred of the new kind of political canvassing which the successive parliamentary reforms had brought about. While Mr Stocks can mouth easy platitudes with the slick conviction of a professional, the modest amateur baulks at self-advertisement.

Though Buchan attributes Lewis’s failure to his personal qualities, his case is actually illustrative of a much wider phenomenon current at the time. As D. Cannadine has shown, the lower house of Parliament had, until the 1880s, been virtually a landowners’ club, the majority of the MPs being recruited from the landed establishment. The upper house, which could thwart any of their bills, was filled with hereditary peers, who also dominated every cabinet, filled the key positions in national and local administration and their younger brothers and sons occupied prestigious jobs in the judiciary, the army, the church, the law and the civil service. The ethos of these patrician professions was leisured and amateur, their influence being so entrenched and sanctioned by the still unquestioned reverence of the populace that they were answerable to no one but themselves. To govern had been the business of the aristocracy and the gentry

since time immemorial, it was their job and they had ensured their political dominance by restricting the agenda of political discussion to issues which interested them, these being mostly finance, religion, administration and foreign affairs. To avoid revolution, they had made concessions to the forces of change but until the last quarter of the nineteenth century their agglomeration of territory and title, power and influence had been so formidable and secure that they had remained a truly supra-national governing class which had largely retained its aristocratic exclusiveness. But the winds of change were already sweeping through their ranks even before the Third Reform Act of 1884 which dramatically changed the structure of rural politics to their disadvantage. In some heavily industrialised shires local administration had already been invaded by men of non-landed background. Increasing patrician poverty, the result of agricultural depression, and the changed and much enlarged electorate had decreased the number of landowners standing for parliament. The Third Reform Act heralded a new political era where the traditional methods of territorial control no longer sufficed and where the patricians themselves felt increasingly beleaguered. The Act abolished many small boroughs which in 1867 had been retained to support the landed interest and for the first time gave a fair share of seats to metropolitan, urban and industrial areas. The rearrangement of constituency boundaries created many new county constituencies which were wholly urbanized or suburbanized and reduced significantly the number of traditional rural seats where the aristocracy and gentry might still hope to feel at their ease. But worst of all, the Act dramatically extended the county franchise by giving the vote to the rural labourers. The situation for the local landed interest was further exacerbated by the Liberal reforms of the 1890s and 1900s which fundamentally changed the composition of the local magistracy and the Tory reform of local government which robbed the local magnates and gentry of most of their administrative functions. In more industrialized regions this brought along a virtual rural revolution, bringing democracy to the countryside. In more rural areas, where the old ways still persisted, the composition of the county councils nevertheless moved towards the greater inclusion of the middle classes. The changed nature of local government, more bureaucratic and professionalized, soon made the old style of amateur patrician government look increasingly anachronistic. It also changed the nature and working of county elections. In Cannadine's words:

They removed rural politics from the direct and confident control of the landed interest, and made necessary a wholly new style of political management. The demise of the old two-member constituencies meant that the traditional pattern of gentry-arranged compromise between conservative and radical candidates was no longer possible. The massive extension of the electorate meant that old methods of control (and intimidation) would no longer work. The need to canvass more widely and to organize more thoroughly, combined with the intrusion of party agents from London, meant that politics became more professional. And

the growth in the number of contested elections, the increased influx of non-landed and carpet-bagger candidates, and the greater stress on national issues eroded the local and intimate nature of county politics, which had been the essential precondition for patrician dominance. (1996: 142)

For the landed interest the consequences of the Third Reform Act were not uniformly disastrous, for the great estates in Britain did not disappear overnight and if the landowners were willing to exert themselves, they could still play the most influential role in local politics. In many Scottish counties particularly the feeling of exclusiveness was retained, the landed proprietors and 'county families' still forming a class apart, way above the middle and working classes, but even there the middle-class professionals were becoming increasingly dominant in all local affairs. Nursing a constituency over a long period of time was now a costly and time-consuming business, especially in rural areas where constituencies were large and sprawling. A few speeches in the town hall would no longer suffice, for the candidate had to reach out to every enfranchised labourer in every village. Comfortable evenings at home spent with friends and houseguests had to give way to meetings and political gatherings in halls and schoolrooms, social activities of all sorts and a lot of travelling by motor car to reach distant locations. Many patricians found playing to the crowd demeaning and refused to stand, which further undermined their influence, for the county constituencies were then forced to turn to non-gentry, non-resident candidates. This resulted in the influx of middle-class outsiders into rural areas which had traditionally been the preserve of local aristocracy and resident gentry. This take-over of the rural seats by the moneyed interest and the demise of ancient political families at the hands of radical, nonconformist, petty bourgeois outsiders were much commented upon at the time, and even more so after the general election of 1906 which wiped out a whole cohort of patrician politicians. The final demise of the landed territorial control occurred with the Fourth Reform Act in 1918 which removed the last vestiges of the old system. In some Scottish constituencies the old families remained influential even after the First World War but their influence dwindled with the number of acres they were forced to sell to make ends meet. Effectively, though, in the 1920s and 30s the landowners in most rural constituencies became marginalized, their places having been taken over by professional men with no local links in the community. (Ibid.: 14–15, 148–153)

In the light of the above, Lewis's defeat at the hands of Mr Stocks assumes an additional dimension. His family is very old and with an illustrious past, having produced its fair share of soldiers, statesmen, lawyers and heroes. Differently from the earnest and pushy Mr Stocks, he approaches the contest as an aristocratic sportsman, playing the game for the game's sake and not to win, as befits good form. His mentor Wratlslaw, who had urged him to stand against his own better judgement, had also viewed the whole thing in the same spirit, thinking the fight would do him good and save him from sinking into the

lethargy of the merely domestic. Their acrimonious exchange after a failed campaign is most illuminating, highlighting as in a textbook all the problems related to the new system of canvassing after 1880.

Buchan introduces the chapter called “Home Truths” by comparing Lewis to Bunyan’s Mr Haughty who in *Pilgrim’s Progress* “had carried himself bravely, not considering who was his foe or what was the cause in which he was engaged. It was enough for him if he fought like a man and came off victorious” (HH 81). He has been out canvassing and is now considering his campaign in chivalric terms:

He had now enjoyed ten days of it, and he was heartily tired. His throat was sore with much speaking, his mind was barren with thinking on the unthinkable, and his spirits were dashed with a bitter sense of futility. He had honestly done his best. So far his conscience was clear; but as he reviewed the past in detail, his best seemed a very shoddy compromise. /.../ The great man had refused to speak for him and left him to fight his own battles; moreover, he feared the judgement of the old warrior on his conduct of the fight. He was acutely conscious of the joints in his armour, but he had hoped to have decently cloaked them from others. (HH 82)

Instead of praise for having done his best, he is bitterly rebuked by Wratishlaw as having been quite useless. To Lewis’s protestations that he could not be expected to speak in insincere platitudes, the great man offers an interesting suggestion:

You have also your platitudes to get through with, not because you would stake your soul on your belief in them, but because they are as near as possible the inaccurate popular statement of your views, which is all that your constituents could understand, and you pander to the popular craving because it is honest enough in itself and is for you the stepping stone to worthier work. (HH 82–83)

Lewis cannot take this easy populism seriously and is promptly given a lecture on the differences between a patrician and a bourgeois candidate:

You have had the wrong kind of education, Lewie. You have always been the industrious apprentice, and easily and half-consciously you have mastered things which the self-made man has to struggle towards with a painful conscious effort. The result is that you are a highly cultured man without any crudeness or hysteria, while the other people see things in the wrong perspective and run their heads against walls and make themselves miserable. You gain a lot, but you miss one thing. You know nothing of the heart of the crowd. Oh, I don’t mean the people about Etterick. They are your own folk, and the whole air of the place is semi-feudal. But the weavers and artisans of the towns and the ordinary farm workers – what do you know of them? Your precious theories are so much wind in their ears. They want the practical, the blatantly obvious, spiced with a little emotion. Stocks knows their demands. He began among them and at present he is but one remove from them. A garbled quotation from the Scriptures or an appeal to their domestic affections is the very thing required. Moreover, the man

understands an audience. He can bully it, you know; put on airs of sham independence to cover his real obeisance; while you are polite and deferent to hide your very obvious scorn. (HH 83)

Lewis neatly diagnoses the condition of his whole class when he reveals his true feelings about the whole business of facing the new electorate:

Do you know, Tommy, I'm a coward. /.../ I can't face the people. When I see a crowd of upturned faces, crass, ignorant, unwholesome many of them, I begin to despair of them. I cannot begin to explain things from the beginning; besides, they would not understand me if I did. I feel I have nothing in common with them. They lead, most of them, unhealthy indoor lives, their minds are half-baked, and their bodies half developed. I feel a terrible pity, but all the same I cannot touch them. And then I become a coward and dare not face them and talk straight as man to man. I repeat my platitudes to the ceiling, and they go away thinking, and thinking rightly, that I am a fool. (HH 84)

Characteristically, his worst performance had been provoked by "some wretched London agitator" (ibid.) who had turned the meeting against him. He had lost his temper and harangued the man and the whole meeting, the lordly show of force winning the still deferential people over to his side.

He is not so lucky at the meeting Alice decides to visit the hear him speak. His hesitant manner and lack of forcefulness loses him the respect of the girl and the audience. She, a middle-class girl, is particularly disappointed by his reaction to the aggressive audience. Where a middle-class orator would have quelled the rebellious crowd by a show of force, Lewis reacts with aristocratic nonchalance by treating the whole show as a joke. This inspires in the girl a most interesting meditation on the nature of aristocracy and chivalry worth quoting in full:

She had fancied him a man of power and ambition, a doer, a man of action. Now he was no more than a creature of words and sentiment, graceful manners, and an engaging appearance. The despised Mr Stocks was the real worker. She had laughed at his incessant solemnity as the badge of a fool, and adored Lewis's light-heartedness as the true air of the great. But she had been mistaken. Things were what they seemed. The light-hearted was the half-hearted, "the wandering dilettante," Mr Stocks had called him, "the worst type of the pseudoculture of our universities." She told herself she hated the whole affectation of breeding and chivalry. Those men – Lewis and his friends – were always kind and soft-spoken to her and her sex. Her soul hated it, she cried aloud for equal treatment, for a share of the iron and rigour of life. Their manners were a mere cloak for contempt. If they could only be rude to a woman, it would be a welcome relief from this facile condescension. What had she or any woman with brains to do in that galley? They despised her kind, with the scorn of sultans who choose their women-folk for looks and graces. The thought was degrading, and a bitterness filled her heart against the whole *clique* of easy aristocrats. Mr Stocks was her true ally. To him she was a woman, an equal; to them she was an engaging child, a delicate toy. (HH 87)

Predictably, where Lewis is strong is with his own tenants, but even here it is obvious that old ways no longer work. His friend George, a fellow aristocrat whom he has invited to speak on his behalf, fails to make any kind impression on them until he is forced by insults to drop the politics and appeals to them as Lewis's tenants who have watched him grow up among them and thus know him better than no matter how clever outsider. His youthful enthusiasm for his friend wins this meeting over but the overall vote still goes to Mr Stocks.

To offset the unjust defeat we are shown what a good paternalist Lewis is in a scene after he has gracefully acknowledged the winner and courageously goes to the local inn to face the men who are in his employ but voted against him. They are simple herds and keepers and characteristically it is to them that he turns to learn whether he is still a man. His lavish hospitality and the glowing praise he receives from one elderly servant for being a first-rate sportsman, despite his defeat, re-establish his credentials and also demonstrate the tenet which Digby had popularized, and which had been gladly embraced by the patricians, that they could relate best to their own labourers over the heads of middle-class busybodies. As he is drawn into a general conversation on sheep-breeding, Lewis muses happily:

The election had made him sick of his fellows – fellows who chattered and wrangled and rioted in the sentimental. But now every line of these brown faces, the keen blue eyes, the tawny tangled beards, and the inimitable soft-sounding Southern speech, seemed an earnest of real and strenuous life. He began to find a new savour in existence. The sense of his flat incompetence left him, and he found himself speaking heartily and laughing with zest. (HH 96)

His modest bravery is reaffirmed by a story of how he saved his native servant's life while in India at a very grave danger to himself and he is also revealed as having no racial prejudice. To an incredulous question – characteristically not by a local man, who would know his true character, but a stranger about whether he had really saved a black man and whether he would do the same thing for his Scottish tenants, his instinctive response is the affirmative, for they are his people. The labourers heartily drink his health and he suddenly realizes where his true work is:

His despondency had passed, and a fit of fierce exhilaration had seized him. Men still swore by his name; he was still adored by his country folk; small matter to him if a townsman had defeated him. He was no vain talker, but a man of action, a sportsman, an adventurer. This was his true career. Let others have the applause of excited indoor folk or dull visionaries; for him a man's path, a man's work, and a man's commendation. /.../ A sense of extraordinary and crazy exhilaration, the recoil from the constraint of weeks, dragged his spirit captive. He hummed a dozen fragments of song, and at times would laugh with the pure pleasure of life. The quixotic, the generous, the hopeless, the successful; laughter and tears; death and birth; the warm hearth and the open road – all seemed blent for the moment into one great zest for living. (HH 100)

Before he can realize his destiny, he has to cut his ties with domesticity. In this he is helped by the middle-class prejudice of Alice who fails to see his true worth. Her blinkered vision, which even love has failed to change, casts Lewis unhesitatingly as the idle aristocrat and herself as the earnest democrat. She had briefly been attracted by the novelty of aristocratic leisure but her old Puritan world has reasserted itself and wakened her to arms “against a dazzling new world of love and pleasure” (HH 105). Her passion flounders “on the cold rock of scruple”:

Criticism, a fierce, vulgar antagonism, impervious to sentiment, not to be exorcised by generous impulse – such was her unlovely inheritance. (HH 106)

Lewis, on his part, is determined to cast this mundane suburban merchant’s daughter as his lady of romance, disdainful, unattainable, and himself as the despondent lover, fervently and deliriously searching for a spark of fire behind her icy demeanour. In his happy dream of love he fails to react quickly enough when Alice falls into a pool and thus gives Mr Stocks the chance to become a hero. His self-recrimination knows no bounds and he completely refuses to listen to the word of reason. Determined to drag out his misery and play the chivalrous loser, he generously, and without asking Alice’s opinion, leaves her to his worthier rival, indulging himself in long tirades of self-recrimination. A thousand incidents of ready courage are forgotten as he castigates himself for being an ineffectual dreamer, a coward who has finally been unmasked. He senses keenly his apartness from the whole bustling world in which he has no part, especially in the narrow middle-class world of Alice’s family, whom he briefly meets before decisively cutting his ties with them. That this romance would never have worked becomes clear from the juxtaposition of the scriptural dogmatism of Alice’s father and the broader, pragmatic and tested vision of the empire-builder in a debate concerning the Ten Commandments. The injunction not to kill for the suburban merchant has no immediacy and he can be unbendingly doctrinaire about it. Lewis, having experienced native disobedience and the dire consequences of it for the safety of his party, shocks the company by admitting the necessity of the death penalty in cases where leniency would do more harm than good. Before they part forever, Lewis is given a chance to prove his manliness by rescuing the girl from some drunken wanderers on the moors, but such is the modesty of the man that he fights the men out of the sight of his lady and thus refuses himself this single opportunity of proving his true worth to her.

While he is silently pining away, his destiny is being shaped in the faraway capital. The native tribes of the North-West Frontier have become restive and he is chosen as the most suitable man who, having explored the region, can ascertain the real reason behind this sudden activity. Wratislaw, who recommends him, draws his character in terms which were then highly complimentary and conventional when applied to aristocrats whose upbringing had

been steeped in chivalry and who consequently found their contemporary society not very amenable. These Late-Victorian and Edwardian young men were habitually described as having been born out of their time, in the sense of their being too chivalrous for the pragmatic modern age, where the qualities they had developed in themselves were useless or misplaced and their possible field of action severely curtailed by civilization which, by having invaded almost all the corners of the earth, left no scope for feats of daring and adventure. (Cannadine 1996: 382–383) They would have made either great crusaders, Elizabethan explorers or, in the case of Scotland, noble embraces of lost causes, be it James V's at Flodden, the campaigns of Montrose or the Jacobite rebellions. Thus we see Lewis, whose ancestor has indeed fought with Montrose, described as follows:

The vitality of a great family has run to a close in him. He is strong and able, and yet, unless the miracle of miracles happens, he will never do anything. Two hundred years ago he might have led some mad Jacobite plot to success. Three hundred and he might have been another Raleigh. Six hundred, and there would have been a new crusade. But as it is, he is out of harmony with his times; life is too easy and mannered; the field for a man's courage is in petty and recondite things, and Lewie is not fitted to understand it. And all this, you see, spells a kind of cowardice: and if you have a friend who is a hero out of joint, a great man smothered in the wrong sort of civilisation, and all the while one who is building up for himself with the world and in his own heart the reputation of a coward, you naturally grow hot and bitter. (HH 142)

Wratislaw takes it upon himself to persuade Lewis to go to Kashmir and in the process defines for us, and Lewis, the Victorian meaning of Castiglione's *sprezzatura*, which now is called competence. They start by agreeing that competence is the highest happiness in life. It is important to note that competence does not equate with success, and this applies to all Buchan's heroes who wrestle with the same problem, no matter what ages they operate in. The distinction is vital and refutes two misunderstandings about his protagonists which frequently occur when it is overlooked. The first is that his upper-class heroes with brilliant careers are careerists, being so effortlessly successful, and the second that, as they usually turn down a prospect of material success, they have somehow chosen failure. In no later book is the difference between success and competence so explicitly analysed as in *The Half-Hearted*, so it merits a closer look.

And what do we mean by competence? [Wratislaw asks.] Not success! God knows it is something very different from success! Any fool may be successful, if the gods wish to hurt him. Competence means that splendid joy in your own powers and the approval of your own heart, which great men feel always and lesser men now and again at favoured intervals. (HH 150)

The reader will recall that *sprezzatura* was the highest form of competence in any field of action, achieved effortlessly by great men in whom it is a form of

inborn grace and to be aspired to by lesser men, who should take their cue from their superiors and try to imitate them until, after hard practice, they have attained a verisimilitude of grace, which also signifies their moral improvement. To this is added Carlyle's Gospel of Work which was designed to banish religious doubt by advocating strenuous action, doing one's duty in the name of a higher cause, which would restore meaning to human existence. Wratislaw goes on:

There are a certain number of things in the world to be done, and we have got to do them. We may fail – it doesn't in the least matter. We may get killed in the attempt – it matters still less. The things may not altogether be worth doing – it is of very little importance. It is ourselves we have got to judge by. If we are playing our part well, and know it, then we can thank God and go on. That is what I call happiness. (Ibid.)

Carlyle's simple dictum to counter doubt, '*Know thy work and do it*', had come to him after years of agonized introspection and was borrowed from Goethe, whose remedy it had been for fruitless speculation leading to inaction. Wratislaw tells the same to Lewis:

And how are you to get happiness? Not by thinking about it. The greatest things of the world have all been done by men who didn't stop to reflect on them. If a man comes to a halt and analyses his motives and distrusts the value of the thing he strives for, then the odds are that his halt is final. You strive to strive and not to attain. (Ibid.)

It was the Romantics who had first posited the value of striving for striving's own sake. The Victorians, after Carlyle, strove towards the Ideal, a goal of unselfish action which he had also called Duty and the discovery and pursuit of which would win for them 'Spiritual Enfranchisement' for the vital energies of life which doubt and indecision had denied them. The Ideal, being abstract, could take on any number of meanings or remain altogether ill-defined. In the latter case striving for it frequently became an end in itself, a form of more passionate living, the inner eye of the pursuer focusing not so much on the vague or abstract ideal, as on one's pursuit of it. Victorian literature is full of passionate strivers with vaguely defined lofty aims, the most famous of them probably being Tennyson's Ulysses with his immortal, and highly influential, injunction "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." (Houghton 1985: 253, 291–297)

With general striving goes forgetfulness of the self. Wratislaw again:

A man must have that direct practical virtue which forgets itself and sees only its work. Parsons will tell you that all virtue is self-sacrifice, and they are right, though not in the way they mean. It may all seem to you a tissue of contradictions. You must not pitch on too fanciful a goal, not, on the other hand, must you think on yourself. And it is a contradiction which only resolves itself in practice. (HH 151)

Hoby back in Elizabethan times had translated *sprezzatura* as recklessness, meaning a competence so perfect that one need no longer concentrate on what one is doing and can perform his actions with complete abandon. Such forgetfulness of the self is the closest equivalent to inborn grace and was the supreme goal of Castiglione's courtier. It can also be the supreme goal of an empire-builder.

Now that he has found his work, Lewis can cut his ties with domesticity. His mind still fully "unplumbed", he fluctuates between the excitement of taking to the road again and the misery of his present condition, ranting at "the whole struggling sordid crew, all the cant and ugliness and ignorance of a mad world, his weakness in the face of it, his fall from common virtue, his nerveless indolence", in his agony praying for a delivery from the "bondage" of doubt. Hungering "morbidly for ill-fortune, something to stamp out the ease in his soul" which would "weld him into the form of a man", the prospect of a secret reconnaissance mission to the native tribes of Kashmir arouses in him the delight of boyish enthusiasm:

Now at least he had found a helm and a port to strain to. /.../ He had got his chance and the rest lay with himself. It was a chance of high adventure, a great mission, a limitless future. At the thought the old fever began to rise in his blood. The hot clear smell of rock and sand, the brown depths of the waters, the far white peaks running up among the stars, all spoke to him with the long-remembered call. Once more he should taste life, and alert in mind and body, hold up his chin among his fellows. It would be a contest of wits, and for all his cowardice this was not the contest he shrank from. (All quotes HH 155–156)

Already the present realities of home and his love for Alice are receding into the background, to the realm of memory. He can now reach back across generations to his ancestors with a new pride in his own heritage and view his estate and its delights with the keenness of an exile. His mind set on his mission, he discovers that his "hunger for domesticity had gone, and the girl was now less the wife he had desired than the dream of love he had vainly followed" (HH 157). Though they meet one more time and confess their love, and the girl is willing to break her engagement with Mr Stocks, Lewis resolutely refuses to reconsider his position of a permanent exile whose only happiness is a memory of impossible love. She will be his princess and he her knight, their trite little dialogue at the parting mixing modern confusion and stale conventions of romance:

"This upland country is confused with hustling politics, and pastoral has been worried to death by sickness of heart. You cannot find the old peaceful life without."

"And within?" she asked.

"That is for you and me to determine, dear. God grant it. I have found my princess, like the man in the fairy-tale, but I may not enter the kingdom."

"And the poor princess must sit and mope in her high stone tower? It is a hard world for princesses."

“Hard for the knights too, for they cannot come back and carry off their ladies. In the old days it used to be so, but then simplicity has gone out of life.”

“And the princess waits and watches and cries herself to sleep?”

“And the knight goes off to the World’s End and never forgets.” (HH 166)

During the half-century before the First World War, as D. Cannadine tells us, genteel globe-trotting had assumed “almost epidemic proportions” (1996: 370). Increasingly alienated at home by the disintegration of the old order and the invasion of the countryside by the moneyed middle classes, the grandees and gentry increasingly sought to distance themselves from the inferior classes beneath them by putting as much geographical distance between themselves and those who had spoilt their native arcadia as they possibly could. They went in search of remote locations not as yet contaminated by the tourist industry, where traditional ways of life still prevailed, where hierarchy and paternalism had not yet been undermined by urban civilization, where they could relate as fellow aristocrats to local chiefs and dignitaries, where there was still scope for chivalrous endeavour. (Ibid.: 382)

Ironically, when Lewis reaches Bardur, his starting-off point in Kashmir, he finds a staid community of Englishmen given over to the enjoyment of sports and leisure, which threatens to make a mockery of his mission. He alone on the British side seems to be taking seriously the threatened Russian invasion through a secret pass in the hills, the only other believer in the possibility being his Russian counterpart, a Mr Marker, with whom he has an interesting after-dinner conversation concerning the fate of empires. Mr Marker seems also to be a disciple of Carlyle, and an earnest Calvinist (this may be his half-Scottish heritage coming out), for he challenges Lewis on the weakness of his nation in exactly the same terms as Wratislaw had challenged him on his personal failure. He accuses the British of losing grip, of embracing the cult of abstract ideals instead of hanging on to their famous common sense, of enervating scepticism towards the great things in life, of half-heartedness of belief. But Lewis, having found his work and conquered doubt, can reply with equanimity:

To an outsider we must appear on the brink of incapacity, but then it is not the first time we have produced that impression. You will still find men who in all their spiritual sickness have kept something of that restless, hard-bitten northern energy, and that fierce hunger for righteousness, which is hard to fight with. Scores of people, who can see no truth in the world and are sick with doubt and introspection and all the latter-day devils, have yet something of pride and honour in their soul which will make them show well at the last. If we are going to fall our end will not be quite inglorious. And I personally rather welcome the end if I can hope for the heroic. (HH 203)

But the Russian spy is a better student of the national character that Lewis gives him credit for. To get the meddling Lewis and his friend out of his way for the planned uprising and invasion, he sends him on a fool’s errand, telling to his native ally:

They are the common make of Englishmen, worshipping a god which they call their honour. They will do their duty if they can find it out, and if not they will make trouble for us. Now there is but one plan, to create duty for them which will take them out of the way. (HH 207)

Blissfully unaware of this, Lewis sets out to warn a distant garrison of imminent (non)-attack in the heady spirit of romance, glad to be getting down to some real piece of work. He infests his rather uneventful journey with the spirit of knight errantry, seeing himself as a crusader penetrating the mysteries of the East:

For the first time Lewis felt the East. /.../ Frontier difficulties seemed matters for romance and comic opera; and Bardur resolved itself into an English suburb, all tea-parties and tennis. But at times an austere conscience jogged him to remembrance, and in one such fitful craving for action and enterprise he had found his errand. Now at last, astride the little Kashmir pony, with his face to the Pole-star and the hills, he felt the mystery of a strange world and his work assumed a tinge of the heroic. This was new, he told himself; this was romance. He had his eyes turned to a new land, and the smell of dry mountain sand and scrub, and the vault-like imperial sky were the earnest of his inheritance. This was the East, the gorgeous, the impenetrable. Before him were the hill-deserts, and then the great warm plains, and the wide rivers, and then on and on to the cold north, the steppes, the icy streams, the untrodden forests. To the west and beyond the mountains were holy mosques, “shady cities of palm trees”, great walled towns to which north and west and south brought their merchandise. And to the east were latitudes more wonderful, the uplands of the world, the impassable borders of the oldest of human cultures. Names rang in his head like tunes – Khiva, Bokhara, Samarcand, the goal of many boyish dreams born of clandestine suppers and the Arabian Nights. It was an old fierce world he was on the brink of, and the nervous frontier civilisation fell a thousand miles behind him. (HH 223–224)

Keenly alive with the pleasure of having found man’s work at last, for having a game worth playing for which his years of sportsmanship were only a preparation, he is to be cheated out of his fantasy world by the parody of an attack on the little outpost, making his errand meaningless.

The crux of the matter is of course that true empire-builders do not run others’ errands but find their own work to do and do it single-handedly. When he is imprisoned on his way back by local tribesmen and learns of the impending midnight invasion, his true work is suddenly revealed to him. The fate of the whole empire is in his hands. Should he be able to delay the troops pouring through the pass known only to him and the enemy, if only for a little while, the country could be awakened to the danger and the empire saved.

Lewis’s last stand achieves the true grandeur of tragedy. Having dispatched his friend to the nearest telegraph-hut to warn Bardur, he goes to the pass to single-handedly confront the enemy. In the last moments before the Russian attack, as he composes himself to meet death, all doubts are resolved and the half-hearted becomes the great-hearted, a true crusader in a foreign land (for he

is well over the frontier line, in the no-man's land of the unexplored hills), a dreamer entering the distant Happy Country and yet the heroic man of action who at last would know the salt and iron of life. Standing on this farthest outpost of empire, its sole guardian, an exile and wanderer, whose bones would never be found and whose glory would never be sung, a nameless sacrifice for the great common good, he can rejoice that he is about to join the brotherhood of warriors, kinsmen in one glorious enterprise which is the ultimate meaning of his quest:

For an instant the extreme loneliness of an exile's death smote him, but in a little he comforted himself. The heritage of his land and his people was his in this ultimate moment a hundredfold more than ever. The sounding tale of his people's wars – one against a host, a foray in the mist, a last stand among the mountain snows – sang in his heart like a tune. The fierce northern exultation which glories in hardships and the forlorn came upon him with such keenness and delight that, as he looked into the night and the black unknown, he felt the joy of a greater kinship. He was kin to men lordlier than himself, the truehearted who had ridden the King's path and trampled a little world under foot. To the old fighters in the Border wars, the religionists of the South, the Highland gentlemen of the Cause, he cried greeting over the abyss of time. He had lost no inch of his inheritance. Where, indeed, was the true Scotland? Not in the little barren acres he had left, the few thousands of city-folk, or the contentions of unlovely creeds and vain philosophies. The elect of his race had ever been the wanderers. No more than Hellas had his land a paltry local unity. Wherever the English flag was planted anew, wherever the last stand was made in the march of Western progress, wherever men did their duty faithfully and without hope of little reward – there was the land of the true patriot. (HH 276)

When the moment comes, he throws himself into the fight with reckless abandon, his self quite annihilated in this final surge of energy as he picks off his men one by one and then plunges into their midst, fighting like a maniac until trampled underfoot. He had humbly prayed to be allowed at least a good beginning or a gallant failure, but his is the ultimate victory, for his message reaches the south and as dawn breaks over his mangled body, the enemy knows itself to be beaten, Lewis having ruined their plan of a surprise attack which was their only hope of success. But Lewis's victory is also intensely personal, his selfless sacrifice being the highest proof of his supreme competence, which for him was the equivalent of happiness. Should we miss this, the ending is there to remind us, his fellow aristocrat, the tribal chief who had held him prisoner, reverently marking himself with his blood, with the words "This man was of the race of kings." (HH 283)

Francis Carev (*A Lodge in the Wilderness*)

In 1901 Buchan joined Lord Milner's staff in South Africa as his Political Private Secretary. It was his first time abroad and working for the High Commissioner for South Africa brought him into direct contact with the administrative problems of the Empire. The South African War had just ended and Milner had recruited from England young men, inexperienced but full of energy and enterprise, who would help him rebuild the country. Buchan was assigned the task of repatriating the Boers from the concentration camps to their farms which in many cases had to be rebuilt and re-stocked. For the inexperienced young bachelor the challenges were enormous, but so was the sense of achievement, and the exhilaration of helping to build a new country fired him with a new zeal for Empire. New Imperialists like Milner at the time propagated a vision of a more closely knit imperial federation to withstand the growing competition from Britain's rivals but the idea failed to elicit wide popular appeal and had to be abandoned. Imperialists had to settle for a milder form of union in which the white self-governing dominions were to be allowed more freedom to go their own way, while Britain's tropical possessions, so manifestly unable to pursue the path to nationhood as yet, were administered by the mother country. Before the General Election of 1906 Milner's methods came in for severe criticism from the opposition and no Liberal Imperialist chose to stand up on his behalf. This was seen as a betrayal by Milner's friends, of whom Buchan was one, and may be responsible for the sometimes quite agitated tone of *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, a novel of ideas Buchan published in 1906. It takes the form of a symposium in which representatives of different fields and interest groups debate the idea of empire. To grasp better the mood in which it was written, let us briefly turn to Buchan's autobiography *Memory Hold-the-Door*, where he speaks about the impact the job in South Africa had on him:

I acquired a political faith. Those were the days when a vision of what the Empire might be made dawned upon certain minds with almost the force of revelation. To-day the word is sadly tarnished. Its mislikers have managed to identify it with ugliness like corrugated-iron roofs and raw townships, or, worse still, with a callous racial arrogance. Its dreams, once so bright, have been so pawed by unctuous hands that their glory has departed. /.../ Something like the sober, merchandising Jacobean colonial policy has replaced the high Elizabethan dreams. But in those days things were different. It was an inspiration for youth to realise the magnitude of its material heritage, and to think how it might be turned to spiritual issues. Milner, like most imperialists of that day, believed in imperial federation. So did I at the start; but before I left South Africa I had come to distrust any large scheme of formal organization. I had begun to accept the doctrine which Sir Wilfrid Laurier was later to expound; that the Dominions were not ready for such a union and must be allowed full freedom to follow their own destinies. But on the main question I was more than a convert, I was a fanatic.

I dreamed of a world-wide brotherhood with the background of a common race and creed, consecrated to the service of peace; Britain enriching the rest out of her culture and traditions, and the spirit of the Dominions like a strong wind freshening the stuffiness of the old lands. I saw in the Empire a means of giving to the congested masses at home open country instead of a blind alley. I saw hope for a new afflatus in art and literature and thought. Our creed was not based on antagonism to any other people. It was humanitarian and international; we believed that we were laying the basis of a federation of the world. As for the native races under our rule, we had a high conscientiousness; Milner and Rhodes had a far-sighted native policy. The “white man’s burden” is now an almost meaningless phrase; then it involved a new philosophy of politics, and an ethical standard, serious and surely not ignoble. (MHD 129–130)

While travelling on assignments in the North Transvaal, he had fallen in love with the Wood Bush, the plateau not unlike an English landscape park high above the malarial bushveld. Its scenic splendour and ideal location between the stony Pietersburg uplands and the tropical flats have manifestly inspired the vision of Musuru, the home of Mr Francis Carey in *The Lodge in the Wilderness*.

Musuru, the venue of the symposium, stands for everything British imperialism can offer to a man with a global vision. It is also Buchan’s dream house and the most perfect realisation of his favourite concept of a domicile which serves simultaneously as a sanctuary and a watchtower. It is characteristically placed on the narrow ledge where civilization and savagery meet and it serves as a beacon in the wilderness, a source of inspiration and solace for those who have embraced the imperial mission. Buchan has placed Musuru not in the Transvaal but Uganda, for the house is not merely one of the many homes, scattered across the Empire, of Carey the “intelligent millionaire” (LW 7) but, as it later appears, might serve as a model hill station, inspiring a world-wide network of similar beacons which might enable the white man to rule over his tropical possessions without undue damage to his health and well-being. The description is worth quoting in full.

The present writer is ill-equipped for the task of describing great houses, but Musuru demands that he should dedicate his slender talents to the attempt. From a wayside station on the railway between Mombasa and Port Florence a well-made highway runs north along the edge of the plateau through forests of giant cypress and juniper. To the east lies the great Rift valley, with the silver of its lakes gleaming eerily through the mountain haze. After a dozen miles the woodland ceases and the road emerges on a land of far-stretching downs, broken up into shallow glens where streams of clear water ripple through coverts of bracken and lilies. Native villages with bee-hive huts appear, and the smoke from their wood fires scents the thin upland air. Now the road turns west, and the indefinable something creeps into the atmosphere which tells the traveller that he is approaching the rim of the world. Suddenly he comes upon a gate, with a thatched lodge, which might be in Scotland. Entering, he finds himself in a park

dotted with shapely copses and full of the same endless singing streams. Orchards, vineyards, olive-groves, and tobacco-fields appear, and then the drive sweeps into a garden, with a lake in the centre and a blaze of flower-beds. The air blows free to westward, and he knows that he is almost on the edge, when another turn reveals the house against the sky-line. It is long and low, something in the Cape Dutch style, with wide verandahs and cool stone pillars. The sun-shutters and the beams are of cedar, the roof is of warm red tiles, and the walls are washed with a delicate pure white. Standing, as I have seen it, against a flaming sunset, with the glow of lamplight from the windows, it is as true a fairy palace as ever haunted a poet's dreams. Beyond it the hill falls steeply to the Tropics, and the gardens run down into the rich glens. Its height is some nine thousand feet above the sea, and its climate is always temperate; but three thousand feet beneath it is Equatoria, and on clear days a gleam can be caught of the great lakes. So the gardens, which begin with English flowers, fall in tiers through a dozen climates, till azalea gives place to hibiscus, and hibiscus to poinsettia, and below in the moist valley you end with orchids and palms.

Entering the house through the heavy brass-studded doors, you come first into a great panelled hall, floored with a mosaic of marble on which lie many skins and karosses, and lit by a huge silver chandelier. In a corner is a stone fireplace like a cavern, where day and night in winter burns a great fire of logs. Round it are a number of low chairs and little tables, but otherwise the place is empty of furniture, save for the forest of horns and the grinning heads of lion and leopard on the walls. The second hall is more of a summer chamber, for it is panelled in lighter wood and hung with many old prints and pictures concerned with the great age of African adventure. There you will find quaint Dutch and Portuguese charts, and altar-pieces gifted by a de Silveira or a de Barros to some Mozambique church long since in ruins. Brass-bound sea-chests, tall copper vases of Arab workmanship, rare porcelain of the Indies, and rich lacquer cabinets line the walls, and the carpet is an exquisite old Persian fabric. Beyond, through the folding windows, lie the verandahs, whence one looks over a sea of mist to the trough of the lakes. To the right stretch more panelled chambers – dining-room, smoking-rooms, a library of many thousand volumes, and as fine a private museum as you will find in the world. To the left are the drawing-rooms, hung with flowered silks and curious eastern brocades, opening on a cool verandah, and lit in the evening by the same wild fires of sunset. Upstairs the bedrooms are masterpieces of arrangement, all fresh and spacious, and yet all unmistakably of Africa and the Tropics. From any window there is a vision of a landscape which has the strange glamour of a dream. The place is embosomed in flowers, whether growing in brass-hooped mahogany tubs or cut and placed daily in the many silver bowls; but no heavy odours ever impair the virginal freshness of the house. Luxury has been carried to that extreme of art where it becomes a delicate simplicity. It is a place to work, to talk, to think, but not to idle in – a strenuous and stimulating habitation. For on every side seems to stretch an unknown world, calling upon the adventurous mind to take possession. (LW 17–19)

The owner of all this splendour, Mr Francis Carey, is conceived by Buchan as a model empire-builder. Obviously inspired by Cecil Rhodes, as far as the

grandeur of his imperial vision is concerned, Carey's character still has a wider interest for the scholar of Late-Victorian and Edwardian chivalry, for it is an amalgam of traits current and admired at the time which were seen as lying at the heart of British colonial endeavour.

Carey, "the most patriotic of millionaires" and "the richest of patriots" (LW 11), has amassed his fortune very much like Rhodes, in the colonies. Having initially gone out to Africa for his health, he had "[b]y a singular turn of fate /.../ stood by the cradle of great industries" (ibid.). A pioneer of "the richest gold-mining area in the world" (ibid.), he had poured his huge riches into shipping lines, railways, newspapers, teak-forests and tobacco farms and then doubled his fortune by investing in copper. Like many dedicated empire-builders, he is single and is spoken fondly of having "espoused the State" (ibid.). His needs are modest but very special:

In London he had modest chambers on a second floor in Half-Moon Street, but no man owned more lordly country houses. The feudal manors of impoverished English squires held for him no charms. It was his business, he said, to show the world a more excellent way. At the head of a long glen in the Selkirks, where snow-peaks rose out of pine forests, he built himself a hunting-box. In a scented Kashmir valley, among thickets of rhododendrons, he had another, where lamas and Turcoman merchants, passing on their way from Leh to Srinagur, brought all the news of Central Asia. A bungalow in a Pacific isle, a fishing lodge in New Zealand, and a superb farm of the old Dutch style in the Blaauwberg, were other of his dwellings. But his true home, if a nomad can be said to have one, was his house in Musuru, on the scarp of the Mau plateau, looking over the great trough of Equatoria. Here, in the midst of a park of many acres, he lived as Prester John may have lived in his Abyssinian palace. He might lounge through the world of fashion in an old tweed coat, but his heart was on the side of magnificence. He sought for romance in life, and found it by the device of importing the fine flower of civilisation into the stronghold of savagery. It pleased him to shuffle unregarded in a London crowd, knowing that over seas half a continent waited upon his will. His amazing energy annihilated space, and he found time in a crowded life to live in his many houses more regularly than the modest citizen who owns a mansion in Bayswater and a villa at Cannes. (LW 11–12)

His influence in society is immense but mysterious, for some people even alarming in its scope, yet it can only be described as admirable, for he invests his huge income generously and wisely on public needs. He has devised a vast scheme of education whereby school leavers from the colonies can continue their studies in the old universities of England, which too have benefited from his bounty. He has built dwellings for workers in the slums and helped them start a new life abroad by planting settlements in new lands. And all this he has done so modestly as to have incurred no wrath of the public, the usual fate of influential but less retiring men.

He was accepted as a kind of national providence, scarcely more to be criticised than the Monarchy. If some called his faith imperialism, others pointed out how

little resemblance it bore to the article cried in the marketplace. It was a creed beyond parties, a consuming and passionate interest in the destiny of his people. (LW 13)

It is his habit to entertain a party of his friends, whom his critics call “Careyites”, every year at one or other of his homes, where excellent entertainment is coupled with serious talk on business and politics. The symposium at Musuru is occasioned by the defeat of the Unionists (a coalition of Tories and Liberal-Unionists) at the hands of the Liberals at the general election of 1906 when the electorate turned down Joseph Chamberlain’s Tariff Reform which would have introduced protective measures to help the British industry and commerce to withstand the competition from Germany and the United States. Indoctrinated for so long about the benefits of untrammelled free trade, the voters preferred the short-term prospect of cheap food to the vision of a more integrated Empire and the viability of the Anglo-Saxon race. Carey, a imperial mystic, “viewed the change with philosophic calm” (LW 14), trusting “the instincts of his race” (ibid.) to make the right decision in the end, but to learn the lesson of this temporary setback, he has asked his friends to Musuru to talk over the meaning of Imperialism, now that it has been “tossed down into the arena of politics to be wrangled over by parties and grossly mauled in the quarrel” (ibid.).

Once the guests are assembled and settle down to talk, Carey opens the discussion by defining Imperialism as “a living creative faith” (LW 27) which has currently been “dragged in the mire” (LW 26) by former friends and enemies alike. The Little Englandism having triumphed under the Liberals, a need has arisen to define anew the Tory imperialism. As the phenomenon is deemed too complex for a single definition, Carey sets the premise of the discussion by calling it “a spirit, an attitude of mind, an unconquerable hope”, “a sense of the destiny of England” and “the wider patriotism which conceives our people as a race and not a chance community” (LW 28). The discussion that follows falls out of the scope of the present treatise, so we will concern ourselves only with those aspects of Carey’s life and work which are illustrative of chivalry in the service of Empire.

His inspiration is firmly Carlylean. In the first evening he relates to his guests how he first came upon Musuru and found his mission in life. Having trekked across the fever-ridden plains of Uganda and climbed the health-giving hills, he had one day gone to the edge of the plateau at sunset to look down into the Tropics he had just left behind and had had a revelation:

That hour is as clear to me as if it had been yesterday. There was a fresh, clean wind blowing, which put life into my bones, and I stood on the edge and looked down thousands of feet over the little hill-tops to the great forest and on to the horizon, which was all red and gold. I knew that there was fever and heat and misery down below, but in the twilight it was transfigured, and seemed only a kind of fairyland designed for happiness. I was a poor man then, poor and ambitious, hungering for something, I did not know what. It was not wealth, for I

never wanted wealth for its own sake. It was a purpose in life I sought, and in that moment I found it. /.../ I realized that the heavenly landscape below me was far more real than the place of dust and fever I had left. And in that hour I saw my work, and, I think, too, the ideal of our race. If we cannot create a new heaven, we can create a new earth. 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for us; the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' (LW 31–32)

The statement resonates with Victorian sentiments which had sustained the British empire-builders throughout the nineteenth century. At the heart of their faith in Empire, as J. Morris has shown, was their pride in having been pioneers in abolishing slavery in their colonies. The emancipation of slaves had been the greatest triumph of the Evangelicals of Exeter Hall and was seen as having put the British morally on a special plane. If so much could be achieved at home by mere agitation, what other great things might not be accomplished if the British concern with cruelty and injustice were to be extended to embrace the whole world. The evils of slavery, ignorance and paganism could be tackled at their source and the benefits of new technology, free trade and revealed religion taken to people who lacked them. The British Empire thus would not be a tyrannical empire in the continental sense, like that of Napoleon which the freedom-loving British people had helped to defeat, but a moral one. So the first imperial purpose of Victoria's reign was to extend the convictions of Exeter Hall to all parts of the world. For many Victorians their instinct to empire could in such a manner be rationalized as a call to Christian duty to protect the welfare of backward peoples, which was to evolve into the concept of trusteeship. In time Empire itself became a kind of faith, the instrument of the providential destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, whose God-given mission it was to be the great improvers of the world. (1998a: 36–39, 318, 328, 380)

Instrumental in putting the imperial idea in the very centre of national affairs had been Ruskin. In his inaugural Slade Lecture at Oxford in 1870 he spoke about the destiny of England (1905: 41–43):

There is a destiny now possible to us – the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness to govern, and the grace to obey. We have taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now betray or learn to defend by fulfilling. And we are rich in an inheritance of honour, bequeathed to us a thousand years of noble history, which it should be our daily thirst to increase with splendid avarice, so that Englishmen, if it be a sin to covet honour, should be the most offending souls alive.

In the last few years, he argued, the laws of natural science and new means of transit and communication had turned the habitable world into one big kingdom. Who should be its ruler? Will it be ruled by Mammon and Belial?

Or will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings, a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts, – faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of

irreverent and ephemeral visions, – faithful servant to time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour of goodwill towards men? (Ibid.)

To refuse this unique destiny and the road to beneficent glory is shameful and untimely. Instead, the nation should pull together in one huge effort, for the choice for England is either “Reign or Die”:

And this is what she must either do, or perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; – seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea: and that, though they live off a distant plot of ground, they are no more to consider themselves therefore disfranchised from their native land, than the sailors of her fleets do, because they float of distant waves. So that literally, these colonies must be fastened fleets; and every man of them must be under authority of captains and officers, whose better command is to be over fields and streets instead of ships of the line; and England, in these her motionless navies (or, in the true and mightiest sense, motionless *churches*, ruled by pilots on the Galilean lake of all the world), is to “expect every man to do his duty”; recognizing that duty is indeed possible no less in peace than war; and that if we can get men, for little pay, to cast themselves against cannon-mouths for love of England, we may find men also who will plough and sow for her, who will behave kindly and righteously for her, who will bring up their children to love her, and who will gladden themselves in the brightness of her glory, more than in all the light of tropic skies. (Ibid.)

Disraeli, the flamboyant Tory Prime Minister, took the vision of seers like Ruskin, crystallized the idea, polished it up and made it part of the Tory political credo. His Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, put into nutshell the conception of imperialism of the British kind. Differently from Caesarism (or despotism), imperialism of the false kind, British imperialism of the right kind would be a world-wide trust, dedicated to keeping the peace, elevating the savage, relieving the hungry and uniting in loyalty all Britons overseas. British expansion overseas was not aggression but the mere extension of benevolent British institutions and wholesome influences overseas, by force if necessary. Thus formulated, Imperialism became a great popular movement and during the last twenty-five years of Victoria’s reign, gave the British the most satisfying and exciting period in their history. (Morris 1998a: 382–389)

Much of the driving force of Imperialism, as of Victorian progress in general, was sparked off by man’s struggle with the environment and for many imperialists this struggle became an end in itself. The Carlylean notion of perpetual striving for striving’s own sake inspired a breed of stoic adventurers for whom the imperial mission was a personal challenge. These men, embarking on adventure in strange lands and relishing hardships for the moral good it did

to their souls, loved to speak about making the world blossom in new colours. New Imperialists especially at the turn of the century loved to dwell on the British Empire as a fertilizing influence in the world. (Morris 1998b: 67, 305)

New Imperialists also loved to dwell at length on the nature of their Empire and the precise principles of their own creed which they found it difficult adequately to formulate and propagate to their own satisfaction. They frequently felt unappreciated and misunderstood and tended to be on the defensive. The Scramble for Africa had alerted them to the dangers posed by rival empires and they felt a need for a fresh synthesis of motives which would fire the hearts of men with new conviction. However, centuries of intensely practical empire-building had left little room for theorising and the British, unlike the French, had never been good with abstractions. (Ibid.: 499) So when Carey's guests assemble for their first session after a day spent exploring the amusements of his estate, their first concern is to define the nature of their creed, for, as Carey puts it, "Our country is hungering and thirsting for a living faith." (LW 43) Examination of the press and rival party programmes having revealed the average man as being a confused Imperialist, if not actively hostile to the creed, he can sum up the findings by declaring imperialism not a creed but an attitude of mind, a matter of unquestioned belief, like the existence of monarchy. To inspire the half-hearted and refute the critics, the first duty of Imperialists is thus the instruction of the average man about the benefits of his Empire.

Since the beginning the Empire had been the project of the elite, as B. Porter has shown. The upper and upper middle classes who ruled at home did also the imperial ruling abroad and until the 1880s they had seen no reason to involve those further down the social scale in the doings of Empire. It could function very well without them and there was no need to enlighten them about it. Everything changed when rival expanding empires started to come up against each others borders in parts of the world which had hitherto allowed expansion without conflict. Securing new territory and holding on to old acquisitions in such conditions required far more effort and commitment than before. In the post-Darwinian 'keen race of nations' that lay ahead, in which the 'strong' nations would eat up the 'dying' ones, the Empire would need all the manpower it could get. The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 had expanded the electorate at home, giving the vote to the large swathes of hitherto disenfranchised lower middle and working class males. Economic liberalism had failed to lift many of them out of poverty and they were becoming increasingly vocal. Organized socialism raising its head again after the failure of Chartism in the 1840s could mean class war. A new social adhesive had to be found now that the ruling classes could no longer be certain of the working classes' unquestioning loyalty to their betters. A new patriotism was called for which would consolidate the Empire by giving the lower classes a vicarious share of the great national enterprise hitherto appropriated by the upper classes alone and bribe the workers away from socialism. The working man and the paternalistic

imperialist could join hands over the heads of free-market capitalists hated by both. Still, it was difficult to gauge the workings of the working man's mind and the failure to hit the mark with the 'people' continued to frustrate Imperialists. In the class-confrontational 1890s and 1900s it proved tricky to take the workers on board. The only safe way to do it seemed through the old paternalist pattern where the workers still knew and acquiesced to their place. (2004: 164–168, 223–226)

Carey, the model Imperialist, is given a chance to demonstrate this in practice. One day his guests are taken to a model settlement he has founded in the tropical wilderness. It is a Scottish Mission headed by Reverend Alexander Macdowall who, having been one of the founders, is in a position to relate the full history of the place. It appears that ten years ago it was a savage place where tribal warfare was rife and the land was raided by Arab slave-dealers. Christian missionaries were massacred and they had made little headway with the natives. Few white men visited the place, mostly travellers and hunters, but there was lack of food and medicines until Carey came along. The house at Musuru made all the difference. A place of inspiration and regeneration, in a cool hill country is serves as a temporary refuge for those white people who have to toil in the tropics and has put new life into the country by starting new industries. Its founder is credited with more influence among the natives than any man since Livingstone himself. The extent of this is demonstrated the next day when the local chiefs and white settlers are summoned to meet Carey.

Carey's great authority with the natives is underlined by the fact that the chiefs will come all armed. Carey has chosen to meet them on equal terms, as free men, and he pacifies his friends who fear for his safety by pointing out that in this country it is the sign of a free man to carry spear and shield and the meeting is no different from any in Albert Hall, except that the spectators "have better manners and are on the whole better to look at" (LW 134). Indeed, the chiefs turn out to be extremely docile and give Carey the royal salute. Carey, who has been given thirty native names, all flattering, speaks to them in their own language, with the exception of a few cases of a dialect unknown to him, when a local interpreter is called in. While the talk is restricted to crops and stock diseases, Carey's tone is quiet and measured but when the discussion switches to some tribal disturbance on the border and one of his decisions seems to be questioned, his quiet tones change to sharp command and his face hardens. The spectators are impressed by his "superb air of authority" (LW 135), the men in the company seeming to shrivel in comparison with his massive and brooding presence and one of the ladies remarking on how handsome this makes him look. She had seen him before only in the London setting where his clothes did not seem to fit and his carriage compared unfavourably with military men, but here, among his own people, she has to admit, he "looks like a king" (ibid.).

The white settlers Carey chooses to address from the pulpit. His congregation consists of teachers from the industrial school, local traders and planters and a few government officials. Carey knows everyone by name and takes a kindly interest in their welfare. Most have been to his house at Musuru and his greetings to them are “those of a popular country squire with his neighbours at meet or market” (LW 135–136). The little mission church is packed to overflowing and there is “a Sabbatical hush in the audience” (ibid.). It is indeed a religious service, though Carey, when ascending the pulpit brushes aside the Bible. The religion is Empire and Carey has come to address fellow crusaders:

This is not a service, so we need waste no time in preliminaries. I have asked you to come here to-day because I wanted to meet you face to face and say certain things to you. We are all fellow-workers in one cause, though we call it by different names. /.../ I am not going to talk to you about theology, but what I have to say is vitally concerned with religion. Whatever our creeds /.../ we are all serious men, and in our various ways, as far as our imperfect light allows, we may claim to be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. (LW 136)

Their crusade is to fight against “ignorance, stupidity and barbarism” (ibid.), their chief task being “the wise management of the natives peoples” (ibid.) on which everything else depends. In this struggle the settlers have one huge advantage over those whom they have left behind in England:

[Y]ou have the tremendous advantage that you have your foes in concrete shape before your eyes and know exactly what you have to get to grips with. In England we have the same enemies, but we cannot see them, and we have first of all to go and hunt for them; and there is a perpetual difference of opinion as to which is which – some calling ignorance honesty and stupidity wisdom. You are spared all this fuss. You know what brutality is and what decency is. You have got to convert the one into the other. (Ibid.)

Carey then proceeds to talk about law and order, the two central tenets of the British imperial mission. Convinced of their own moral superiority, the British saw themselves as being uniquely gifted with the art of good government and felt an overwhelming urge to impose their practices on the less fortunate. As Cecil Rhodes so memorably declared, “We happen to be the best people in the world, with the highest ideals of decency and justice and liberty and peace, and the more of the world we in habit, the better it is for humanity.” (Quoted in Morris 1998b: 124) A spiritual destiny had called the British to their pre-eminence and this destiny entailed special duties. In their white colonies the British saw themselves as fostering the evolution of free institutions modelled on those of the Mother Country, in their coloured Empire they governed as a benevolent despotism. Here the stance they adopted was that of trustees whose role it was to guide and protect, remoulding nascent nations in the British image. The Empire to an enthusiastic observer at the turn of the century could

well appear as an immense educational experiment whereby even the most disadvantaged could in time be led at least to partial self-government. The inherent problem at the heart of this vision, which troubled many Imperialists, was the contradictory nature of these aims. As Lord Cromer so succinctly put it, “The Englishman as imperialist is always striving to attain two ideals which are apt to be mutually destructive – the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his supremacy, and the ideal of self-government, which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position.” (Quoted in Morris 1998b: 515)

We see Carey wrestling with a similar dilemma. He starts his lecture by discussing the position of the black native in relation to law and the true meaning of guardianship to the ‘lesser’ races. Having been responsible for some changes in the local criminal law, he speaks about the two dangers of underrating and overrating the black man:

You argue, some of you, that the native is a child and must be treated as a child and punished at the discretion of his master, who stand to him *in loco parentis*. You maintain that to make native discipline depend upon the cumbersome machinery of a court of law is to make it a farce. Who, you ask, when his servant offends will be at the pains to take him before a magistrate? He will either take the law into his own hands, which will be bad for the discipline of the State, or he will let the matter pass, which will ruin the discipline of his household. That may be so, but if he follows the latter course he will have only himself to thank, and if he follows the first he will be punished. And the reason is that we dare not underrate the status of the native. You may repeat that he is a child, but the law must look upon him not as a potential but as an actual citizen, and must give him the dignity of such. (LW 137–138)

To leave administering justice to private individuals would lay the way open to temptation towards brutality and injustice, or mere caprice, and this would degrade the white man himself. Which does not mean that in case of an emergency the white man cannot take the law into his own hands but the law should serve as a deterrent so that it is broken only with good justification, for good government means a fair deal to all.

Fair dealing, so central a principle for the British gentleman when dealing with his own kind, however, does not mean fair opportunity for all classes and colours. If a practical man may err on the side of despotism when dealing with black crime, the idealist is likely to err on the side of overrating the potential of the black man and think him equal to his own race. Against this Carey warns his congregation in no uncertain terms:

The native mind is sharp and quick, his memory is often prodigious, and he has histrionic and mimetic gifts which may mislead his teachers. But for all that he stands at a different end of the scale of development from the white man. He represents the first stage of humanity, and he has to travel a long way before he can reach that level which we roughly call our civilisation. You cannot annihilate

ten strenuous centuries by assuming that they have not existed, and inviting the native to crowd the work of them into a year or two. Between his mind at its highest and ours at its lowest there is a great gulf fixed, which is not to be crossed by taking thought. It is less a difference in powers – for he has powers as remarkable often as our own – as in mental atmosphere, the conditions under which his mind works, and consequently the axioms of his thought. He will learn gladly what we have to teach him, and you will imagine that the lesson of civilisation has been learned, when suddenly you are pulled up by some piece of colossal childishness which shows that that mind whose docility you have admired has been moving all the time in a world a thousand years distant from your own. (LW 139)

As the native mind is “grossly materialistic” (ibid.), lacking the higher ‘spirituality’ of the white man, his education should be framed accordingly. He should be taught the elements of citizenship and Christian morality, he should be able to read and write, learn about trades and handicrafts and generally “the simple laws of a decent life” (LW 140) but he should be denied higher education. Higher education for the natives would mean “black parsons and black schoolmasters, and for that class the market is overstocked, and they are outcasts from the society of those whom they would claim as intellectual equals” (ibid.). Too much education would spoil their native innocence and make them too similar to modern white men:

It is not our business, as I keep telling my friends, to create a new heaven but to create a new earth. Get these strange, sullen, childish, dark-skinned people hammered into a peaceable and prosperous society, and you have laid the foundations of all virtues. Teach them the elements of cleanliness and comfort and you will find them already grounded in honesty and loyalty; and you may soon get them to take their place in our complex system, – low down of course, – but still indubitably within it. Don’t try and make out of them theologians or schoolmasters or bagmen or electioneering humbugs. Leave the scum of civilisation for civilisation to deal with. You have still, thank Heaven! a simple community; keep it simple so long as you can, for it is on simple lines alone that it can make true progress. (Ibid.)

As B. Porter has pointed out, benevolent paternalism came naturally to the rulers of the Empire. They just shifted their habitual ‘lord-peasant’ relationship to their new surroundings and treated the natives as they had formerly their own working classes at home. Raised in the spirit of chivalry, many of them found the capitalist emphasis on materialism and the new democracy not to their liking and when given a chance in the colonies to create new societies, they strove to keep what they saw as modern evils as far from them as possible. (2004: 228–229) If the natives were to be kept in their place and not corrupted by aspiration, for the working classes at home, now increasingly enfranchised and reluctant to remain deferential, the Empire offered a possibility of social elevation. By becoming emigrants, they could not only have a chance of a better life, but they could also improve their social standing by becoming involved in

the day-to-day running of the Empire. In such a manner the working-class resentment would not be channelled into socialism but into sharing the glory of empire-building. Carey again:

You may say that I offer you, merchants, planters, teachers, all of you, a gloomy programme. We are to civilise the land, you will say, by slow methods, and we shall be dead and buried long before the results come. Your complaint would be just if your only task were native administration. But it is not. You have the economic and political development of the land to think of, and you have your own future, for there is a white community growing up beside the black. And remember that the presence of the native races makes every man of you an administrator. If you face your duty, every white citizen will have the training of a pro-consul, the same kind of problems to solve, the same qualities of character in demand. That is no small honour. What kind of race will your sons be if they grow up with the sense of civic duty alive in them, content to work slowly because hopefully and long-sightedly? I am one of the men who believe in the regeneration of the African continent. When the world has preached its lessons to her, she will also have something to say to the world. I do not think that the battles and the bloodshed, the young men who never came back, the lonely graves in the desert, the hopes crushed only to revive again – I do not think that these will have been in vain. (LW 140–141)

In short, they too, like Carey himself, can become ‘men of destiny’.

Earlier in the book some men of the party had gone big game hunting in the bush and Hugh Somerville, Buchan’s alter ego in the book, had raised the topic of the ‘men of destiny’ and had argued that maybe a Caesar once in a thousand years would be able to match an instinct for deeds and the understanding of the magnitude of them, while hordes of men throughout ages have uncomprehendingly done heroic things, unable to articulate their motives and aware only that they acting in the grip of some gigantic destiny. He is contradicted by Edward Considine, an explorer and famous big-game hunter, a man well familiar with the pioneering type, being one of the breed himself. To him is given the role of explaining the motives of these silent heroic men who toil away in some distant corner of the earth without reward or renown. There may be a hundred types of them, but they are all dreamers:

They understand better than you or I can tell. /.../ I’ve been stuck up in half a dozen parts of the world with fellows who hadn’t been home for years. Most of them used to talk Johnsonian English simply because they had forgotten when they last spoke to a white man, and thought of English only as a book language. None of them talked much, and it was the devil’s own job to get them to speak of themselves. But they were the salt of the earth for all that, living hard, working hard, and ready to sell their lives any day in the way of business. Do you think that kind of man is only a mill-horse, jogging on in his round because there is nothing else for him to do? I tell you every man-jack of them has got his own private dream. He knows he has got his race behind him, and that he is the

advance guard, and the thought bucks him up to rot away in swamps and shiver with fever, and in all probability be cleaned out in some obscure row. (LW 99)

They are wanderers who prefer the wilds to civilisation and to an ordinary bourgeois mentality they might look like they have abnegated their responsibilities. But theirs is a virtue of a different kind. These people have turned their backs on bourgeois materialism:

We're devilish unsatisfactory people to our wives and families, I know, but still, we don't rust. We keep our minds keen and our bodies active, and I scarcely call that idling. We're the least frivolous kind of man on the planet, and the least vulgar. Look at the ordinary industrious citizen. He wants to 'get on' in his beastly trade, and to have a house in Mayfair and a place in the country, and marry his daughter well, and get into Parliament and have a title to clap on to his squalid name. Or perhaps he wants to be applauded in the papers and be treated as a personage wherever he goes. I ask you if these are ambitions for a white man? (LW 101)

To Hugh's doubtful question as to what good is *wanderlust* in itself, Considine has a ready reply:

We are the advance-guard, always pushing a little farther on and making the road easier for those who come after us, the serious solid fellows who make laws and create industries, and generally reap where we have sown. You cannot measure the work of a pioneer by the scale of a bagman. We keep the fire burning, though we go out ourselves. Our failure is our success. We don't found colonies and build cities, but unless we had gone before no one would have come after. (LW 103)

These lonely warriors of Empire are "the electric force in civilisation" (LW 104) and their work is "spiritual and unworldly" (ibid.). And though their motivating force is individualism, they inspire the nation, Considine tells us, citing Buchan's, and the Victorians', favourite example of Raleigh:

Raleigh failed in everything he put his hand to, and went to the scaffold with all his schemes discredited. And yet he had set moving the force which was to make his dreams a superb reality. The pioneer must always be ploughed under, but only the fool considers him a failure. (Ibid.)

Now, having witnessed the fruits of the labours of such men at Carey's model village, Wakefield's former doubts as to their role have been completely refuted and he can exclaim with passion:

I objected to the 'man of destiny.' I withdraw that objection now. The thing may be undemocratic, illiberal, and reactionary – I do not care a penny whistle if it is. It is the only power which can plant civilisation in the wilds and turn savages into orderly citizens. Our democracy is excellent in its way, but it can't do that sort of thing – you want the individual with his heart on fire to start the ball. You want faith and hope, and men have these things but not departments or nations. So much do I value the man of destiny now that I will describe him in the words

of a writer I detest – he is ‘the Cyclopean architect, the roadmaker of humanity!’
(LW 142–143)

It is left to Carey himself to delineate the type of man, not unlike himself, whose destiny it will be to shape the fate of nations. Here the central problem will be the relationship between the imperial idea and capitalism. The increasing predominance of the industrial and commercial capitalists in all spheres of life in Victorian England had incurred the loathing of the upper and upper-middle classes whose position this undermined. They had embraced the revived cult of chivalry to withstand the onslaught of the entrepreneurial spirit and had reformed the public schools to instil in their sons, and hopefully in the sons of the bourgeoisie, the values of *noblesse oblige*. The imperial governors had to be able to rise above the highly individualist ethic of the trader and to this end the public schools had launched a comprehensive attack on materialism. Competitiveness and acquisitiveness were condemned, as were the concomitant vices of vulgarity and self-indulgence, the love of luxury and ease. However, the day-to-day running of the Empire needed money and thus the fundamental gulf between the two ethos had to be overcome. The trader, like the worker, had to be incorporated in the idea of Empire, and here again we find that the answer lies with Carlyle’s Chivalry of Work. In order to be taken aboard, the entrepreneur has to ennoble himself by overcoming his selfishness.

Carey begins his argument by defining the relation of Imperialism to capitalism:

We are told that the Empire is the dream of capitalism, and like every falsehood the saying contains the perversion of a truth. Large schemes over a large area require money and an elaborate organisation. Imperialism involves such schemes; therefore Imperialism demands wealth and organisation. That is our simple syllogism. Imperialism is not capitalism, but is akin to it in method. The capitalist makes his fortune by recognising the value of combination and the wisdom of earning profits over the largest area possible. Imperialism depends likewise upon a form of combination. Both believe that Providence is on the side of the bigger social battalions. (LW 146)

The difficulty is posed by the relation of the Imperial state to its rich citizens. Free Traders throughout the nineteenth century had disparaged and distrusted the imperial state and the state had had no great fondness for the too enterprising merchant adventurers whose bold advances into new territory had not infrequently brought along complications on the international arena. Carey’s answer to the dilemma is to call into being a responsible millionaire. Arguing that the current argument as to which would ultimately prevail, Socialism or Individualism, is meaningless, for neither complete state-socialism in the Empire nor the complete disappearance of the capitalist class will ever occur, the problem is rather how to harness the energy of the entrepreneurs for the benefit of the State. For if that is not done, and here Carey shows remarkable foresight about the dangers of international corporate capitalism in a globalising

world, power will be hijacked by great capitalists completely outside the control of governments and with no responsibility to the state. To avert this great danger he has no remedy to offer, except the elevation of the millionaire himself to the level of a statesman. As the arena of his operations within the Empire will be global, so should his thinking be transformed accordingly. The choice facing him is rather straightforward:

The capitalist of the future, we agreed, will not be the ordinary dull rich man. He will either be a great criminal or a considerable patriot. If he is the first I hope that the law may be strong enough to keep him in bounds, but if he is the latter he may be a great ally of the State. The millionaire who makes money solely to spend it on his pleasures is a cumberer of the ground. I do not care whether his pleasures are gross or refined, he is in any case a cumberer of the ground. But the man who with such a narrow soul will make a great fortune in the future will be rare indeed. He may make a million by rigging the market, but he will do little good at that serious exploitation which is closely akin to statecraft. It is only the latter which concerns us, for it is only if the latter falls into the hands of the fool or the knave that the political danger I dread will appear. Remember, I am talking of exploitation and of new production, not of the mere control of distribution, which is the object of the ordinary Transatlantic trust, for it is in the first kind of activity only that empire and capital come into close relation. The men who will succeed, I hope, will be those who find themselves capable of only spending a portion of their fortune on themselves and who have no desire to ruin their families by hoarding it for them. They will find their hobby not in rare furniture or on the Turf, but in doing, so far as the individual can, the work of the State. (LW 149–150)

The enterprise of such men would also solve the complicated problem of administering the tropical dependencies of the Empire. As in the foreseeable future these colonies, unlike the white Dominions, can never have a share in their own government “for they can never be wholly settled by the white man, but must remain largely in the hands of races for whom autonomy is unthinkable, at any rate for the next century or two” (LW 114), the burden of administration will fall upon individuals who will have to work out a *modus vivendi* in a climate and setting which is hostile to them. Here Musuru can serve as an example of what a white man can do to make his sojourn in the tropics palatable. Carey’s guests repeatedly compare his great house to a lighthouse illuminating the Dark Continent. He himself prefers the doctrine of the vantage-grounds. These would be patches of “white man’s country” next to tropical territories which must be governed but cannot be inhabited by Englishmen. As the tropical administration must be spasmodic, these places will serve as health resorts for rest and recreation and centres of administration, much like Simla in India. They would also be feudal and undoubtedly aristocratic, great mansions like Carey’s, with the advantage of being situated in an unspoiled paradise.

As D. Cannadine has shown, emigration, for the first three quarters of the nineteenth century chiefly the lot of the impoverished or criminally-minded

working classes, in the last quarter of the century started to attract also the aristocratic and professional classes. As opportunities for gentlemen diminished at home, it became increasingly fashionable to look for alternative sources of income in the white dominions and in the habitable parts of Africa. Younger sons, the indebted and the impoverished could there make a new start and contribute to building a new nation in the process. Their attitudes were notably patrician and feudal and in the colonies they tended to evolve a self-indulgent and escapist lifestyle. "In their bungalow mansions, with their large verandas, magnificent gardens, and retinues of servants, filled with silver, furniture, and family portraits brought out from the ancestral home, they sought to recreate a stable, rural, hierarchical, aristocratic world, which had already disappeared in modern, industrialized, democratic Britain." (1996: 429, 435, 441)

Musuru is the epitome of such a homestead. Its resources are limitless, providing facilities for every aristocratic sport. An English butler supervises a staff of docile Masai boys and the core of the estate workers are emigrants from England, from Carey's old home in Devonshire where they could no longer make a living as farmers and shepherds. The house, compared to Aladdin's palace by one enthusiastic guest, is a virtual treasure trove. A description of the Blue Drawing-room is indicative of its style:

Its fluted white walls were set with panels of old turquoise-blue silk; the ceiling was modelled on that of a famous chamber at Versailles; the carpet was of rich white velvet pile; the furniture was all copied from a boudoir of Marie Antoinette. The books in the cabinets and on the tables were bound in vellum or blue morocco, and the few ornaments were of blue Sèvres ware or old ivory. The one picture, which hung over the chimney, was a Watteau of blue-robed nymphs dancing under a great expanse of spring sky. The lamps had shades of ivory silk, and in the soft light the pure colours swam in a delicate harmony as of a summer noon. The scene was so strange and perfect that most of the guests gave an involuntary gasp of admiration. (LW 145–146)

Its gardens cover three thousand feet of a mountain-side and represent a cross-section of idyllic scenery of twenty climates.

Such a scale demands superhuman detachment from the iron dreamers who embark on a mission to change the world. Carey, who "broods over the country like a fate" (LW 175), is an elemental force, a solitary figure towering above mere mortals, his heart ablaze with heavenly fire. Perhaps it is fitting to leave him with a memorable vignette, related by Hugh to Lady Flora, the two young people having stood throughout the book for the future of the Empire and the first couple in the primeval paradise of the virginal continent:

I remember once in London walking down Piccadilly, when suddenly Carey came up and put his arm in mine. He walked with me for a hundred yards without speaking, and then he said in that abstracted way of his, 'Every man should be lonely at heart,' and went off. He, at any rate, has the true spiritual austerity. Do you remember the story of the Italian poet's mistress, sitting at

some *fête* in beautiful clothes, when a scaffolding broke and she was crushed to death? And then they found that beneath her silken robes she had worn sackcloth. The world pictures Carey with his power and his wealth, and notes only the purple and fine linen, but few can penetrate to that inner austerity which looks upon such things as degrees of the infinitely small. He is, if you like, a practical mystic – an iron hand to change the fate of nations, and all the while a soul lit by its own immortal dreams. As you said, Lady Flora, while he lives we, who are his friends, can never sink altogether into the commonplace. And when he dies, we can write over him that most tremendous of all epitaphs – ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ (LW 176–177)

Richard Hannay (‘The Green Wildebeest’, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Greenmantle*, *Mr. Standfast*, *The Three Hostages*, *The Island of Sheep*)

Richard Hannay is definitely Buchan’s most famous hero and the one whose character has been most often dissected by critics, usually in the spy novel context, for with the Hannay books Buchan emerges as a master of spy fiction and is also one of the founding fathers of the genre. The present author is not going to delve into the secret service aspect of the books but will concentrate on Hannay as a sportsman in the sense this was understood at the time.

Much harm to Hannay’s character and Buchan’s reputation was done by R. Usborne’s 1953 book *Clubland Heroes* which offers a disparaging and wilful misreading of his character in tune with the elite-bashing climate of post-war Britain. Meritocracy on the ascendant trampled underfoot middle-class authors with aristocratic sympathies (besides Buchan Evelyn Waugh is a glaring example), trying to force them into the procrustean bed of socialist dogma. In angry rebellion against pre-war values, young men hastened to ‘expose’ the risibility of those Victorian values which had survived the Great War but not its sequel. With the falling away of the Empire the post-colonial angst and guilt for a long time forbid sympathy with characters who had helped to sustain it. Usborne’s rage against Hannay (for he is far from equanimous and admits his fervent dislike) epitomizes the fashionable anti-elitist stand of the times, for he singles out for his scandalously reductive treatment very few of Buchan’s characters, notably Hannay and his associates, and proceeds to notoriously misread them by showing them to be crazed with success and cold baths. His chief objection to them is that they are eager sportsmen (while he likes characters who enjoy their after-luncheon naps). What is at stake here, as Usborne fully well knows but chooses to make a pretence of not being aware of, as he bashes away, are gentlemanly values which in post-war egalitarian Britain were declared redundant. Ironically enough, by singling out Hannay for his attack and accusing him of ruthless social climbing, choosing to portray him as

a colonial rough-neck who inexplicably makes a career among the gentry of England, he overlooks the possibilities of egalitarian self-identification with the character for the post-war readers, many of whom must have had humbler beginnings than Hannay. Actually the very premise of his argument is misguided, for had he not been so in thrall of his agenda, he would have been bound to notice in the texts that he chose to include in his book that neither is Hannay a colonial simpleton of lowly origin who through sheer luck makes good nor is there a cold bath in sight.

Scholars of spy fiction love to dwell on Hannay's amateur and civilian status, apparently because Hannay himself insists on presenting himself as such and because this makes his character fit neatly the type which had been emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century, notably in the fiction of Erskine Childers, William Le Queux and E. P. Oppenheim. In their books an amateur gentleman accidentally stumbles on a conspiracy and manages to foil the plans of foreign spies intent on harming his country. (Butts 1990: 44–46) A closer attention to snippets of information Hannay himself lets drop as he tells of his adventures in the first person singular reveals a much more complicated character than the unsophisticated backwoodsman from Rhodesia. One has the feeling occasionally that part of the trouble when assessing Hannay's character lies in the ingrained attitude to colonials generally, not only in fiction, which was endemic in British society even at the height of imperial glory. B. Porter (2004: 141) has shown that the common stereotype of 'colonials' has in certain educated circles in Britain always been culturally disparaging.

Hannay makes his first appearance not in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* in 1915 as is popularly assumed but, as A. Lownie (CSS/III 78) has pointed out, in the short story 'The Green Wildebeest' which was written in 1912 but appeared only in print in 1927 in *Pall Mall Magazine* and was a year later included in the collection *The Runagates Club*. From these two sources Hannay's background can be pieced together and, instead of Usborne's colonial 'roughneck', what emerges is an officer and a gentleman.

Though he does not elaborate on his class, his manners and attitudes place him as a professional in the upper middle, which is nowhere more evident than in the paternalistic remark he casually makes in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*:

A man of my sort, who has travelled about the world in rough places, gets on perfectly well with two classes, what you may call the upper and the lower. He understands them and they understand him. I was at home with herds and tramps and roadmen, and I was sufficiently at my ease with people like Sir Walter and the men I had met the night before. I can't explain why, but it is a fact. But what fellows like me don't understand is the great comfortable, satisfied middle-class world, the folk that live in villas and suburbs. He doesn't know how they look at things, he doesn't understand their conventions, and he is as shy of them as of a black mamba. (TNS 97)

His father owns a international mining firm with German partners (this gives Hannay a perfect command of German, so useful in his intelligence work) and he had been brought out to South Africa only when he was six (TNS 5). He has never been home since but has held on to his Scottish identity, describing himself as “Scots through and through” (TNS 18).

He starts his career as an imperial soldier. We learn that he has killed a few men in the Matabele War (TNS 16) which marked the birth of Rhodesia and has then spent two years campaigning with the Imperial Light Horse in the Boer War (CSS/III 78). To this period also belongs his first encounter with intelligence work, for as he tells us in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, he was an intelligence officer at Delagoa Bay during the war, where he did quite a bit of deciphering:

That is a subject which has always interested me /.../ I have a head for things like chess and puzzles, and I used to reckon myself pretty good at finding out cyphers. (TNS 22)

Delagoa Bay is the Portuguese East Africa, now called Mozambique. Tired of war – “I was thirsty for better jobs than trying to drive elusive burghers up against barbed wire and blockhouses” (CSS/III 78) – he becomes a mining engineer, prospecting for copper in the Zoutpansberg foothills in the north-eastern Transvaal (TNS 22). To this period belongs his adventure of the Green Wildebeest, related in *The Runagates Club*, when his co-traveller, a young Boer called Andrew Du Preez, violates a stockade in a native village and thus desecrates a sacred grove with a well. Hannay shows himself here a model empire-builder, mindful of local custom and belief. He goes to apologize to the blind guardian of the well for his companion’s misdeeds, for as he says, “I make a point of respecting the gods of the heathen.” (CSS/III 82) Hannay, in line with many a Buchan hero, possesses an acute sense of the sacredness of a place and his regret is sincere:

I had suddenly a horrible feeling of sacrilege. That that young fool Andrew should have lifted his hand upon an old man and a blind man and outraged some harmless *tabu* seemed to me to be an abominable thing. I felt that some holiness had been violated, something ancient and innocent cruelly insulted. At that moment there was nothing in the world I wanted so much as to make restitution.

I spoke to him, using the Shangaan word which means both priest and king. I told him that I had been away hunting and had returned to find that my companion had made bad mischief. I said that Andrew was very young, and that his error had been only the foolishness and hotheadedness of youth. I said – and my voice must have shown him that I meant it – that I was cut to the heart by what had happened, that I bowed my head in the dust in contrition, and that I asked nothing better than to be allowed to make atonement... Of course I didn’t offer money. I would as soon have thought of offering a tip to the Pope. (CSS/III 85)

Leaving Andrew to recuperate from his ordeal in Lourenço Marquez, which is on Delagoa Bay, he goes prospecting in Namaqualand in German South West

Africa (now south-western Namibia) and then to the copper country of Barotseland (now in Zambia) (CSS/III 90). Then comes a three-year stint prospecting for copper in German Damaraland (central Namibia) (TNS 18). His last years in Africa before returning to Britain he spends in Bulawayo (Bulawayo), a mining centre in south-west Rhodesia (TNS 5). A brief look at the map will tell us that in his travels Hannay has criss-crossed the whole African continent south of the Zambesi, no mean feat. Working as a mining engineer has made him rich – “I had got my pile – not one of the big ones, but good enough for me” (TNS 5) – and he stresses that he has made it cleanly and over considerable time (TNS 41), thus removing any suspicion of speculation and underhand dealing. He returns to the Old Country to set himself up as a gentleman, presumably his wealth allowing a comfortable and leisurely existence, and has just spent three months in London thoroughly bored when adventure knocks at his door in the shape of the spy Scudder with his mysterious notebook.

The adventures of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* establish Hannay’s credentials as a bona fide sportsman. An invasion scare story, a new genre recently popularized by Erskine Childers and others in the hectic days of the arms race before the outbreak of war in 1914, it sees Hannay defeat a German conspiracy to secretly invade England with the help of the disposition plans of the British Home Fleet which the German spy group known as the ‘Black Stone’ almost manages to steal from the Admiralty but for the perspicacity of Hannay in spotting their ringleader and unmasking him. He embraces the ordeal which is forced on him by being framed for Scudder’s murder in the spirit of good sportsmanship, as befits a gentleman. His chief motivation, besides clearing his own name, is to avenge Scudder’s death – “I hate to see a good man downed” (TNS 17) is his laconic comment. He is cheered also, after months of being cooped up in town, by a prospect of “a giddy hunt” (ibid.) in the wide open spaces of the Scottish moors. By the end of the chase he has made his peace with the mother country which, like to many a colonial, did not seem quite to live up to his expectations, and established his social credentials with his peers in England by his mettle in defeating the German spy ring. He volunteers to join the New Army in the first week of the war and, owing to his Matabele experience, gets a captain’s commission straight off.

Greenmantle picks up the story over a year later when Hannay is convalescing in Hampshire after the battle of Loos. He has risen to the rank of major in Lord Kitchener’s New Army of volunteers which the Secretary of State for War had called into being after the near annihilation of the British Expeditionary Force in the first months of the war. He has distinguished himself by his brave action at a forward observation post and been wounded in the leg. Just to put this in context, Loos was part of the major allied offensive in the autumn of 1915 to break the deadlock on the Western Front where the initially rapid British advance was stalled by German machine-gun fire and the failure

on the British side to exploit their advantage. The British lost 50,000 men in the “Field of Corpses of Loos” and gained nothing. (Willmott 2003: 108) The dispiriting nature of the modern trench war, so different from the heady expectation of dash and glory of its early days, was becoming all too evident by the end of 1915 and when asked about his views on soldiering by Sir Walter Bullivant who has summoned him to the Foreign Office, his response reflects the general disillusion which was to undermine and destroy, as the war progressed, the pre-war notions about the chivalric nature of warfare.

‘Right enough,’ I said, ‘though this isn’t just the kind of war I would have picked myself. It’s a comfortless, bloody business. /.../ I’m not in this show for honour and glory, though. I want to do the best I can, but I wish to heaven it was over. All I think of is coming out of it with a whole skin.’ (TNS 10–11)

This sporting understatement and ‘muddling-through’ spirit do not fool Bullivant who knows his war record and offers him a chance of a challenge of the old chivalric kind of single combat against overwhelming odds. He is to go on a reconnaissance mission deep into the enemy’s rear to unravel the mystery of growing unrest in the Muslim world threatening the stability of India and thus the Empire and the outcome of the whole war. The terms of Bullivant’s offer similarly echo the ambivalent nature of modern war and an individual’s place in it:

It is a great game, and you are the man for it, no doubt. But there are others who can play it, for soldiering to-day asks for the average rather than the exception in human nature. It is like a big machine where the parts are standardized. You are fighting, not because you are short of a job, but because you want to help England. How if you could help her better than by commanding a battalion – or a brigade – or, if it comes to that, a division? How if there is a thing which you alone can do? Not some *embusqué* business in an office, but a thing compared to which your fight at Loos was a Sunday school picnic. You are not afraid of danger? Well, in this job you would not be fighting with an army around you, but alone. You are fond of tackling difficulties? Well, I can give you a task which will try all your powers. (G 12)

As a spy in enemy territory, he would be beyond the pale and past succour but a free agent with the right to plan his own campaign – very much a questing knight in the wilderness in fact, and this is indeed how Hannay contemplates his mission:

I was asked to go off into the enemy’s lands on a quest for which I believed I was manifestly unfitted – a business of lonely days and nights, of nerve-racking strain, of deadly peril shrouding me like a garment. Looking out on the bleak weather I shivered. It was too grim a business, too inhuman for flesh and blood. But Sir Walter had called it a matter of life and death, and I had told him that I was out to serve my country. (G 16)

It is a road which might or might not lead to death but it is a sure path to individual glory, as Bullivant assures Hannay, by implication precluding a chance of it should he stay in the trenches. Hannay's objection that he is a mere amateur and knows nothing of the East, while there must be thousands of men more qualified than he for the job, Bullivant brushes aside by stating that by being brave, cool and resourceful he has all the qualifications he will need. The future events show him indeed to be in the possession of these gentlemanly qualities and they are shown to be decisive in ensuring the outcome of his mission. His British amateurishness, flair and élan are repeatedly thrown into bold relief by juxtaposing them with the humourless German efficiency, the despised 'Prussianism' of contemporary reference, embodied by Colonel von Stumm.

A modern questing knight who wanders into the unknown to meet challenges which might come his way, his war henceforth is to be of the old kind, composed of a series of one-to-one encounters with the enemy and a final group action with a dedicated band of brothers, a melee into which they ride on horseback, it being the kind of cavalry charge in the field to which modern war had already sounded the death-knell. The exceptionality, nobility and grandeur of his mission is underlined by the calibre of the opponents he comes up against, the most illustrious of them being the German Kaiser himself, an encounter unthinkable if he had stayed in the trenches, where the enemy across the line was anonymous, faceless and virtually invisible, both sides leading secretive, subterranean, 'troglodyte' lives (in P. Fussell's (2000) marvellously evocative term). Hannay's bright daylight world of action and enterprise is in stark contrast to the enforced passivity of trench duty where everyday action in the narrow strip of No-Man's-Land was by necessity restricted to the hours of darkness. In this world of light and colour, away from the crude stereotypes of the front, there is still room for nobility of sentiment and compassion for the deserving opponent, manifest in the vignette with the Kaiser, where instead of gloating over the harassed appearance of his arch enemy, Hannay is moved to pity:

The last I saw of him was a figure moving like a sleep-walker, with no spring in his step, amid his tall suite. I felt that I was looking on at a far bigger tragedy than any I had seen in action. Here was one that had loosed Hell, and the furies of Hell had got hold of him. He was no common man, for in his presence I felt an attraction which was not merely the mastery of one used to command. That would not have impressed me, for I had never owned a master. But here was a human being who, unlike Stumm and his kind, had the power of laying himself alongside other men. That was the irony of it. Stumm would not have cared a tinker's curse for all the massacres in history. But this man, the chief of a nation of Stumms, paid the price in war for the gifts that had made him successful in peace. He had imagination and nerves, and the one was white hot and the others were quivering. I would not have been in his shoes for the throne of the Universe... (G 75-76)

Another moment of revelation comes in a humble woodcutter's cottage in the midst of a Bavarian forest where he has been given shelter by a simple peasant woman after he has escaped from the evil castle of Stumm (for this is a romance landscape of castles and cottages and primeval woods):

That night I realized the crazy folly of war. When I saw the splintered shell of Ypres and heard hideous tales of German doings, I used to want to see the whole land of the Boche given up to fire and sword. I thought we could never end the war properly without giving the Huns some of their own medicine. But that woodcutter's cottage cured me of such nightmares. I was for punishing the guilty but letting the innocent go free. It was our business to thank God and keep our hands clean from the ugly blunders to which Germany's madness had driven her. What good would it do Christian folk to burn poor little huts like this and leave children's bodies by the wayside? To be able to laugh and to be merciful are the only things that make man better than the beasts. (G 98)

Pity for the innocent victims of war, and a resolution to strike a blow for the underdog, are reinforced by the sight of Belgrade. As punishment for the assassination in Sarajevo, Austro-Hungarian forces had invaded Serbia three times and been beaten back, only to subdue and occupy it on the fourth attempt. This heroic resistance of a small nation and the epic retreat of its army in winter across the mountains of Albania to the coast had elicited wide sympathy and admiration. Hannay mirrors this sentiment, feeling impelled to make a stand also for gallant yet defeated nations:

It would have done me a lot of good to have had a word with them [the locals]. I thought of the gallant people whose capital this had been, how three times they had flung the Austrians back over the Danube, and then had only been beaten by the black treachery of their so-called allies. Somehow that morning in Belgrade gave both Peter and me a new purpose in our task. It was our business to put a spoke in the wheel of this monstrous bloody Juggernaut that was crushing the life out of the little heroic nations. (G 116)

Challenges come to the questing knight unexpectedly and in most unlikely places. Also their nature may catch the hero unawares, for there is a certain deviousness about the best of them and they test him in ways un-contemplated and unforeseen. A minor wayside skirmish which helps the plot along yet underlines Hannay's integrity occurs when the bad Turk, Rasta Bey, tries to bribe him to falsify the documents for a consignment of guns temporarily under his command in his guise as an engineer on a German barge and destined to be used against his own side at Gallipoli. Having earlier brushed aside his friend Pienaar's suggestion of sabotage as harmful to their true mission, he now refuses to tamper with the documents to allow the Turks to steal some of the cargo. Fair play and personal honour of a British gentleman are at stake here and all other considerations are brushed aside as Hannay asserts his right, with some threat of violence, to deliver the consignment to its depot "ship-shape and Bristol fashion" (G 115).

Looking back, it seems pretty ridiculous to have made all this fuss about guns which were going to be used against my own people. But I didn't see that at the time. My professional pride was up in arms, and I couldn't bear to have a hand in a crooked deal. (G 115)

However, a much more serious challenge is in store for him in Constantinople. Its source is dark and mysterious, so different from the daylight male world of straightforward challenge and response. The first inkling of its nature is given by the location itself, a fabled oriental city of seduction and ease, which on closer acquaintance appears rotten at the core. It welcomes him with an angry crowd intent on killing him as a German spy. Like all major challenges, it addresses his central but hidden weakness and the struggle in the street is only a foretaste of things to come:

Every man has one special funk in the back of his head, and mine was to be the quarry of an angry crowd. I hated the thought of it – the mess, the blind struggle, the sense of unleashed passions different from those of any single blackguard. It was a dark world to me, and I don't like darkness. But in my nightmare I had never imagined anything just like this. The narrow, fetid street, with the icy winds fanning the filth, the unknown tongue, the hoarse savage murmur, and my utter ignorance as to what it might all be about, made me cold in the pit of my stomach. (G 126)

The city reveals its evilly seductive side in a dirty backyard saloon of Kuprasso's café where he and Pienaar witness a most erotically hypnotizing dance, ambiguously yet prophetically performed by his friend Sandy in disguise. Indeed all three men present will be tested by passion, the old hunter proving immune to the lures of the flesh but the two younger ones succumbing to its force with varying results. The central challenge for Hannay in the book is sexual in nature and it takes the traditional romance form of a mysterious lady in a way-side castle.

Victorian and Edwardian culture had been preoccupied with the dichotomy of the good and bad woman. *Femme fatale*, the evil seductress who destroyed men, was perceived as a fearful force to be combated with all of one's powers. In this light Hannay's first encounter with the chief villain, Hilda von Einem, is most intriguing.

As befits a traditional romance of knight errantry, Hannay stumbles upon her residence in one of the suburbs by accident in the middle of the night when riding for pleasure and getting lost. He is summoned to her presence and gets his first glimpse of her, shrouded in a mantilla in a luxurious motor car, a novel locus of modern romance. He is immediately attracted by the pale and delicate beauty but feels bound to explain his shyness away with lame excuses which nevertheless underscore his sexual purity:

Women had never come much my way, and I knew about as much of their ways as I knew about the Chinese language. All my life I had lived with men only, and

rather a rough crowd at that. When I made my pile and came home I looked to see a little society, but I had first the business of the Black Stone on my hands, and then the war, so my education languished. I had never been in a motor-car with a lady before, and I felt like a fish on a dry sandbank. The soft cushions and the subtle scents filled me with acute uneasiness. I wasn't thinking now about Sandy's grave words, or about Blenkiron's warning, or about my job and the part this woman must play in it. I was thinking only that I felt mortally shy. The darkness made it worse. I was sure that my companion was looking at me all the time and laughing at me for a clown. (G 167–168)

He is invited into the house, the very den of the temptress, and subjected to a test of the wills. What is assessed is his sexual potential, as Hannay is well aware of, and he is both thrilled and frightened:

She was sizing me up as a man. I cannot describe the calm appraising look. There was no sex in it, nothing even of the implicit sympathy with which one human being explores the existence of another. I was a chattel, a thing infinitely removed from intimacy. Even so I have myself looked at a horse which I thought of buying, scanning his shoulder and hocks and paces. Even so must the old lords of Constantinople have looked at the slaves which the chances of war brought to their markets, assessing their usefulness for some task or other with no thought of a humanity common to purchased and purchaser. And yet – not quite. This woman's eyes were weighing me, not for any special duty, but for my essential qualities. I felt I was under the scrutiny of one who was a connoisseur in human nature. (G 168–169)

The male in him is challenged:

I see I have written that I knew nothing about women. But every man has in his bones a consciousness of sex. I was shy and perturbed, but horribly fascinated. This slim woman, poised exquisitely like some statue between the pillared lights, with her fair cloud of hair, her long delicate face, and her pale bright eyes, had the glamour of a wild dream. I hated her instinctively, hated her intensely, but I longed to arouse her interest. To be valued coldly by those eyes was an offence to my manhood, and I felt antagonism rising within me. I am a strong fellow, well set up, and rather above the average height, and my irritation stiffened me from heel to crown. I flung my head back and gave her cool glance for cool glance, pride against pride. (G 169)

As a hero, his strength of character cannot fail, so a way has to be found to make him credibly withstand such a full frontal assault of sexual allure without either casting doubt on his heterosexuality or the fatal power of the lady's charms. Pure sexual attraction has to metamorphose into hypnotism, conveniently to explain Hannay's immunity and draw attention to the unnatural nature of the lady's charm, as if an evil woman of her kind cannot rely on natural means when attracting her following:

Once, I remember, a doctor on board ship who dabbled in hypnotism told me that I was the most unsympathetic person he had ever struck. He said I was about

as good a mesmeric subject as Table Mountain. Suddenly I began to realize that this woman was trying to cast some spell over me. The eyes grew large and luminous, and I was conscious for just an instant of some will battling to subject mine. I was aware, too, in the same moment of a strange scent which recalled that wild hour in Kuprasso's garden-house. It passed quickly, and for a second her eyes drooped. I seemed to read in them failure, and yet a kind of satisfaction, too, as if they had found more in me than they expected. (Ibid.)

Despite his temporary victory, he is aware of the enormity of the challenge and its evil nature:

I had seen the mysterious Hilda von Einem, I had spoken to her, I had held her hand. She had insulted me with the subtlest of insults and yet I was not angry. Suddenly the game I was playing became invested with a tremendous solemnity. My old antagonists, Stumm and Rasta and the whole German Empire, seemed to shrink into the background, leaving only the slim woman with her inscrutable smile and devouring eyes. 'Mad and bad,' Blenkiron had called her, 'but principally bad.' I did not think they were the proper terms, for they belonged to the narrow world of common experience. This was something beyond and above it, as a cyclone or an earthquake is outside the decent routine of nature. Mad and bad she might be, but she was also great. (G 170)

The full destructive potential of the woman, should she decide to exercise it, is frankly recognized when they meet for the second time in Hannay's hotel room. Even on his home ground he feels quite defenceless:

She broke off, and again her strange potent eyes fell on my face. They were like a burning searchlight which showed up every cranny and crack of the soul. I felt it was going to be horribly difficult to act a part under that compelling gaze. She could not mesmerize me, but she could strip me of my fancy dress and set me naked in the masquerade. (G 175)

Hers is an elemental force which Hannay, in his attempt to come to terms with his contradictory feelings of attraction and revulsion, finally ascribes to the gods:

As she spoke I seemed to get a vision of a figure, like one of the old gods looking down on human nature from a great height, a figure disdainful and passionless, but with its own magnificence. It kindled my imagination. /.../ Her pale eyes had the cold light of a fanatic. With her bright hair and the long exquisite oval of her face she looked like some destroying fury of a Norse legend. (G 176)

His mission and the whole war narrows down for him to a desire to get even with this disturbing woman and the rest of his mission he views in terms of a single combat against an overwhelming opponent:

The truth is, I had got out of the way of regarding the thing as a struggle between armies and nations. I hardly bothered to think where my sympathies lay. First and foremost it was a contest between the four of us and a crazy woman, and this

personal antagonism made the strife of armies only a dimly felt background. (G 188)

He manages to convince himself that he hates her and thus saves himself from her evil influence, though recognizing her greatness as an enemy, but his friend Sandy, as we shall see later, succumbs fully, if only briefly, to her charms, until brought out of his daze by the recollection that he is a British officer.

The final confrontation appropriately takes place in the field at Erzerum and Hannay is filled with exhilaration at being back in the front line. He does not forget to be generous to the enemy, praising the Turkish troops he meets on the way as clean fighters and praising their “fine free stride” (ibid.). There is a feeling of relief at finally being able to abandon the disguise and deceit, but even more joy at the sudden simplification of things, when a soldier can be a soldier and the task is clear:

Suddenly I forgot all cares and difficulties of the present and future and became foolishly lighthearted. We were rushing towards the great battle where men were busy at my proper trade. I realized now how much I had loathed the lonely days in Germany, and still more the dawdling week in Constantinople. Now I was clear of it all, and bound for the clash of armies. It didn't trouble me that we were on the wrong side of the battle line. I had a sort of instinct that the darker and wilder things grew the better chance for us. (G 196)

A mood of “reckless bravado” (G 201) seizes him and he goes almost mad with joy at hearing the great guns in action:

It was a sound I had not heard for five months, and it fairly crazed me. I remember how I had first heard it on the ridge before Laventie. Then I had been half afraid, half solemnized, but every nerve had quickened. Then it had been a new thing in my life that held me breathless with anticipation; now it was the old thing, the thing I had shared with so many good fellows, my proper work, and the only task for a man. At the sound of the guns I felt I was moving in natural air once more. I felt I was coming home. (G 202–203)

This statement, so redolent with the mood of the times, needs a little clarification, lest Hannay as a result should appear unduly war-crazed, his character having suffered enough from one-sided treatment.

Today, when the picture of the Great War has for many years been shaped by the critical studies of mainly post-war works of fiction that highlight the futility and suffering of the life in the trenches, raising the inevitable question as to why men kept going at all and allowed themselves to be slaughtered like cattle when they perceived the sheer senselessness of it all, we need a reminder of the mood in the trenches in the middle of the war, before the war of attrition had to some extent undermined morale. How typical Hannay's reaction is, incomprehensible and even absurd as it may today seem, becomes evident when we compare it to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's contemporary statement on what makes the front attractive to soldiers. Writing in 1917, he has this to say:

The front cannot but attract us, because it is, in one way, the *extreme boundary* between what you are already aware of, and what is still in the process of formation. Not only do you see there things that you experience nowhere else, but you also see emerge from yourself an underlying stream of clarity, energy and freedom that is to be found hardly anywhere else in ordinary life – and the new form that the soul then takes on is that of the individual living the quasi-collective life of all men, fulfilling a function far higher than that of the individual, and becoming fully conscious of this new state. It goes without saying that at the front you no longer look at things in the same way as you do in the rear. This exaltation is accompanied by a certain pain. Nevertheless it is indeed an exaltation. And that's why one likes the front in spite of everything, and misses it. (Quoted in Wohl 1979: 219)

Reunited with his band of brothers, Hannay especially joys in the comradeship this brings. R. Wohl (1979: 219) has drawn attention to the special value of comradeship for the combatants of the Great War, reiterated again and again in the literature of the war. Comradeship was more than friendship, arising out of sharing of a common danger, sharpened by shared pleasures and hardships and a sense of alienation from those left behind, who had no idea of the true realities of war. Another aspect of the war experience was its “enormous simplification of life, a throwing off of forms, and going down to bare essentials” (ibid.: 221) which brought its own joys.

All these concerns come across very powerfully when Hannay and Sandy discuss their mission after having made preparations for their last stand. About to be blown to bits by Stumm's guns, they take joy in redefining their position. Now that they have stolen the enemy's defence plans and sent them across the No-Man's-Land with Pienaar, they can review their position, though still behind the enemy's lines. To Sandy's suggestion that they view themselves as the advance guard of the allies, cut off from the main force, Hannay responds with exaltation reminiscent of Haystoun's in *The Half-Hearted*, glorying in the duty done in their country's service:

It cheered me wonderfully, for I knew now what had been the weight on my heart ever since I accepted Sir Walter's mission. It was the loneliness of it. I was fighting far away from my friends, far away from the true fronts of battle. It was a side-show which, whatever its importance, had none of the exhilaration of the main effort. But now we had come back to familiar ground. We were like the Highlanders cut off at Cité St Auguste on the first day of Loos, or those Scots Guards at Festubert of whom I had heard. Only, the others did not know it, would never hear of it. If Peter succeeded he might tell the tale, but most likely he was lying dead somewhere in the no-man's-land between the lines. We should never be heard of again any more, but our work remained. Sir Walter would know that, and he would tell our few belongings that we had gone out in our country's service. (G 257–258)

They had found their work and done it, even if they should vanish from the face of the earth:

‘But our work lives,’ I cried, with a sudden great gasp of happiness. ‘It’s the job that matters, not the men that do it. And our job’s done. We have won, old chap – won hands down – and there is no going back on that. We have won anyway; and if Peter has had a slice of luck, we’ve scooped the pool.... After all, we never expected to come out of this thing with our lives.’ (G 258)

During the long vigil before dawn, wounded and contemplating their end, he composes his mind to meet the inevitable and, once again, it is not the kind of success in life which is ascribed to Buchan’s heroes by virulent critics that he is thinking of. It is success of the humblest and most patriotic kind:

I fancy it isn’t the men who get most out of the world and are always buoyant and cheerful that most fear to die. Rather it is the weak-engined souls who go about with dull eyes, that cling most fiercely to life. They have not the joy of being alive which is a kind of earnest of immortality. ... I know that my thoughts were chiefly about the jolly things that I had seen and done; not regret, but gratitude. The panorama of blue moons on the veld unrolled before me, and hunter’s nights in the bush, the taste of food and sleep, the bitter stimulus of dawn, the joy of wild adventure, the voices of old staunch friends. Hitherto the war had seemed to make a break with all that had gone before, but now the war was only part of the picture. I thought of my battalion, and the good fellows there, many of whom had fallen on the Loos parapets. I had never looked to come out of that myself. But I had been spared, and given the chance of a greater business, and I had succeeded. That was the tremendous fact, and my mood was humble gratitude to God and exultant pride. Death was a small price to pay for it. As Blenkiron would have said, I had got good value in the deal. (G 260)

However, death is not I store for them yet, as the Russians have put their stolen plans to good use and are coming down from the hills. As the Turks turn to flee, they trample Stumm underfoot. In a classic Buchan scene, Hannay does not gloat over his opponent’s ignoble end as Stumm had gloated over theirs, though his last shell had broken his arm, thus establishing his moral superiority over the enemy. Neither does he bear any ill-will towards him when the end comes, only expressing his regret at not having had a chance of a proper one-to-one combat with him before fate intervened. The book ends with Sandy and Hannay riding into the city in the vanguard of the cavalry charge, having rejoined the allies. It is a heady moment of glory and a proper reward for a humble questing knight:

That was the great hour of my life, and to live through it was worth a dozen years of slavery. With a broken left arm I had little hold on my beast, so I trusted my neck to him and let him have his will. Black with dirt and smoke, hatless, with no kind of uniform, I was a wilder figure than any Cossack. I soon was separated from Sandy, who had two hands and a better horse, and seemed resolute to press forward to the very van. That would have been suicide for me, and I had all I could do to keep my place in the bunch I rode with. /.../ Everything flitted past me like smoke, or like the mad *finale* of a dream just before waking. I knew the living movement under me, and the companionship of

men, but all dimly, for at heart I was alone, grappling with the realization of a new world. /.../ All that time I was dreaming, crooning daft catches of song to myself, so happy, so deliriously happy that I dared not try to think. I kept muttering a kind of prayer made up of Bible words to Him who has shown me His goodness in the land of the living. (G 266–267)

In *Mr. Standfast* a year has passed and meanwhile Hannay has made a good career in the army. He had been given a battalion before the Somme and a brigade on the eve of Arras. He has been generously decorated, a D.S.O., a C.B. and the Legion of Honour complementing his Matabele and South African medals. Not yet forty and with good career prospects in front of him, he is suddenly summoned home to infiltrate a pacifist community. Hannay, a bona fide man of action, is forced to adopt the guise of a pacifist himself and thus get acquainted with the mindset of the people who oppose war and have adopted the role of passive resistance. This was a topical issue at the time and considering the passionate nature of the arguments involved, Buchan's treatment of pacifists is remarkably even-handed, the light-heartedly farcical treatment of their community at Biggleswick being balanced by the highly serious treatment of Lancelot Wake who is discussed below.

Passions ran high on the matter of patriotic duty, as A. J. P. Taylor has shown (1992: 18–20, 50–54, 61–65, 89). War had produced a great surge of patriotic feeling and Britain having no standing army, with the exception of the small BEF, had to rely on voluntary recruiting. In the first two years of war more than two million men volunteered to join Kitchener's New Army but to assure a steady supply of men, popular enthusiasm had to be kept constantly astir. Vigilant ladies presented eligible men with white feathers in the street, demagogues monopolized platforms to stir up hatred for Germany and build unrealistic hopes for the future victory. The problem was complicated by the allies' unwillingness to provide clear answers as to why the war was being fought as it was. To avoid a conflict of interests, the central issue of what to do about Germany was never satisfactorily discussed by the allies during the war. Popular opinion in Britain was convinced that Britain was fighting for the liberation of Belgium and to ensure that Germany would never again be in a position to occupy it. The only way to secure this was to defeat Germany conclusively in the field. A small critical minority was dissatisfied with this simplistic slogan of 'a war to end war', which seemed to presume that a solution would miraculously offer itself once victory was achieved. The Union of Democratic Control, set up in 1914, sought to ensure that diplomatic errors or crimes which had led to war should never be made again. They demanded ending the war by negotiations and democratic diplomacy afterwards. The supporters of the U.D.C. tended to think of themselves as 'pacifists'. Their arguments were drowned by a wave of public hysteria which demanded compulsory military service, for it was widely believed that there were hundreds of thousands of 'slackers' in the streets, avoiding the call of duty.

Conscription was introduced in early 1916, with a concession to the Liberals who had been against it that conscientious objectors to military service could state their case to a tribunal which could grant them absolute or conditional exemption. These tribunals and the public proved unsympathetic to their case, with approval from the highest authority. The Russian revolution of 1917 and Russia's exit from the war fired anti-war activists with new vigour, this time fortified with Marxist arguments.

One of Buchan's manifest aims in *Mr. Standfast*, which is set in 1917 and early 1918, is to offer an answer to the then timely question of what Britain is really fighting for. This is done by juxtaposing tradition and modernity as Hannay understands them. Hannay in all the books where he appears stands for the commonsensical, traditional, conventional sensibility. Except for a few brilliant insights when solving puzzles, he is denied extreme flights of fancy or particular intellectual concerns. He is eminently suitable as a character for representing the ordinary man's point of view, which can be thrown into a brighter relief by setting it side by side with a non-conventional view, in this book represented by the pacifists most of whom aspire to some modicum of radical modernity. He comes to the realisation of what patriotism means to him through the discovery of 'Old England'.

His initial response as an active fighting man to the very idea that what he and his fellows are doing in the trenches can be construed by somebody as meaningless is highlighted by his visit to an old fighting comrade called Blaikie who suffers from shell shock. A complete wreck of a man who has lost all interest in life but does not complain, only stares stoically ahead and tries to get a grip on his shattered nerves, is an eloquent evidence of the enormity of the sacrifice demanded by the war from men at the front. Significantly, Blaikie, who like Hannay is a colonial from Rhodesia, had come to Europe to strike a blow for the Old Country but can never have the reward of being able to appreciate the beauty of her women or nature, the shock of having been buried alive by a shell burst having imprisoned him in the narrow confines of his traumatized mind. Not for him the kind of revelation which is in store for Hannay the lucky colonial who has survived long enough to discover for himself the true nature of 'Old England' and what it really is that he has been fighting for.

The discovery is ushered in by Hannay's first glimpse of his future wife during the same hospital visit. Mary Lamington, the good woman who earns his love, first appears as a ministering angel in the nurse's uniform. In great contrast to his first meeting with Hilda von Einem, a foreign seductress wielding a dark power over men from a mysterious dark mansion, Mary first manifests herself to him in an English garden on a sunny afternoon serving tea. Innocent and demure, yet grave and merry, her golden hair like a halo around her head (the choice of her name is surely not accidental), she is a messenger from a different world Hannay is about to enter. Making his way to Fosse

Manor, her home in the Cotswolds, and his too, as he would later buy it and settle there with her, he awakes to the magic of England:

In that moment I had a kind of revelation. I had a vision of what I had been fighting for. It was peace, deep and holy and ancient, peace older than the oldest wars, peace which would endure when all our swords were hammered into ploughshares. It was more; for in that hour England first took hold of me. Before my country had been South Africa, and when I thought of home it had been the wide sun-steeped spaces of the veld or some scented glen of the Berg. But now I realized that I had a new home. I understood what a precious thing this little England was, how old and kindly and comforting, how wholly worth striving for. The freedom of an acre of her soil was cheaply bought by the blood of the best of us. I knew what it meant to be a poet, though for the life of me I could not have made a line of verse. For in that hour I had a prospect as if from a hilltop which made all the present troubles of the road seem of no account. I saw not only victory after war, but a new and happier world after victory, when I should inherit something of this English peace and wrap myself in it till the end of my days. (MS 8)

The house stands on the ancient Roman road, the Fosse Way, by implication forming a living link with the past, but even this corner of rural England, as Hannay is about to discover, is not safe from disruptive forces, from the enemy within. The hall looks appropriately ancient, but the dining-room has been stripped of panelling, hung with black satiny paper and decorated with what appear to Hannay's conservative taste monstrous modern paintings. Hannay is a traditionalist and the world he knows has taken its bearings from a different canon of taste. To understand his reaction to what he calls the "demented modish dining-room" (MS 10) and why the war should look "shriekingly incongruous" (ibid.) in these surroundings and not in the "noble old chambers" of the Manor and the summer landscape around it, we should know what 'Old England' stood for Buchan's contemporaries, as he will return again and again to the theme in the 1920s and 1930s.

The four decades before the Great War R. Strong has called decades of transition, when under the confident and optimistic surface there lurked "a malignant and eroding cancer containing forces which were irrevocably to change the entire structure of British society" (2000: 561). Competition from hostile powers, agricultural depression at home, the increasingly militant working classes, the inevitable extension of the franchise to the non-propertied classes which eroded the traditional power base of the aristocracy, the mortal blow to their fortunes dealt by the introduction of death duties and the supertax on big incomes, the curtailing of the legislative power of the House of Lords, all heralded inevitable change. The arts reflected this restlessness in a series of subversive movements which challenged the status quo and erupted to the fore after 1910 as modernism. The conservative and traditionalist response to these worrying phenomena was a renewed emphasis on the national past. The popular

imagination, in search of certainties, sought to hold on to the old hierarchical values. The country house, which as a power base was in decline, assumed a new status as a cultural icon and the decades witnessed “a final efflorescence of aristocratic culture, resembling in retrospect a rose whose petals are about to fall” (ibid.: 563). The seeds of what was to emerge later in the twentieth century as a full-blown heritage cult were planted in this period when aristocratic seats were recast as emblems of national identity, the very buildings apotheosized as symbols of all that was best in the native tradition. The strong vein of anti-industrialism and anti-commercialism in society, as a result of public school reform now also prevalent in the middle classes who had adopted aristocratic values as their own, manifested itself in the glorification of ‘Old England’. The quintessence of ‘true’ England, almost obliterated by economic progress, was to be sought in the pre-industrial past, in old manor houses, villages, churches and country towns. To quote Strong again:

This was the middle classes reinventing Merry England. From either side of the political divide the rural ideal worked. For socialists it brought back an idealised rural way of life destroyed by Victorian capitalism; for those on the right it apotheosised what had been an aristocratic society. What all this ensured was that the fundamental vision of England was to remain a pastoral arcadian one which it had been since the Elizabethan age, albeit with different glosses put upon it. Englishness was seen to reside in her green and pleasant land dotted with villages and manor houses. Two world wars, far from eroding the myth, only strengthened it. It is still there.

This, of course, explains the conservatism of so much British art from the vernacular of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 1880s to today’s mock Tudor suburban houses. The English way of life was no longer to be seen as a monument to perpetual change and innovation, happy to embrace every technological discovery, but, rather, to reside in an unchanging stability, a preoccupation with the maintenance of the status quo and a deep reverence for the past. In this way ruralism was created as a compensating image for city dwellers. The countryside was presented through all the resources available to early twentieth century media as a timeless vision, a paradise regained. (Ibid.: 570–571)

Especially favoured by this backward gaze was the small manor house, farmhouse or cottage of the Tudor or early Stuart period, the mythical past of the gentry or yeoman yielding the greatest possibilities for identification for the middle classes. Care was taken when restoring old or building new houses to preserve the air of venerable antiquity of the location if at all possible.

It is symptomatic in this context that Hannay should resent the modish artiness of the innovations in the dining-room and associate them with forces of destruction, for they undermine national vigour. The pacifist sympathies of the two elderly spinsters, Mary’s aunts, have opened the house, clearly standing for the virtues of ‘Old England’, to the forces which, if not checked, will destroy it. The danger is insidious and at first manifests itself only in seemingly innocuous things like the use of incense, faked china fruit on the table and candle shades.

What these bespeak of is softness, a perverted, unmanly taste, not in itself a crime in the domicile of ladies but speaking volumes of the company they keep. The “strained”, “uneasy”, “abnormal” (MS 10) atmosphere by implication reflects the mental state of the guests whose condition is epitomised by the literature they read, *Leprous Souls*, a novel by a Russian radical, being their favourite at the moment. Hannay’s wonderfully terse comment, when asked if he had read it, obviously applies not only to the novel:

By a curious chance I had. It had drifted somehow into our dug-out on the Scarpe, and after we had all stuck in the second chapter it had disappeared in the mud to which it naturally belonged. (Ibid.)

Compared with the rot inside, the garden outside is still intact and unsullied and it is no accident that Hannay should properly meet Mary again in the garden and receive his instructions from her not in the house but amidst the venerable landscape through which he had earlier walked, humbly and quietly, as though through a cathedral. For she, too, stands for ‘Old England’ and in his eyes has practically merged with the landscape of which she is part. The landscape, for all its peace, belongs to war as a reward for those who fight to preserve tradition and Mary is the symbolic prize, as the events of the novel will bear out. This identification is made early, during their first conversation at the dinner table:

And oddly enough her mere presence took away the oppression I had felt in the room. For she belonged to the out-of-doors and to the old house and to the world at large. She belonged to the war and to that happier world beyond it – a world which must be won by going through the struggle and not by shirking it, like those two silly ladies. (MS 11)

Her identification with England is so strong that she virtually becomes Keats’s nightingale:

Outside the house beyond a flagged terrace the lawn fell away, white in the moonshine, to the edge of the stream, which here had expanded into a miniature lake. By the water’s edge was a little formal garden with grey stone parapets which now gleamed like dusky marble. Great wafts of scent rose from it, for the lilacs were scarcely over and the may was in full blossom. Out from the shade of it came suddenly a voice like a nightingale.

It was singing the old song ‘Cherry Ripe,’ a common enough thing which I had chiefly known from barrel-organs. But heard in the scented moonlight it seemed to hold all the lingering magic of an elder England and of this hallowed countryside. (MS 12)

She gives him his instructions and he infiltrates the pacifist community of the Garden City of Biggleswick.

The community of Biggleswick is a miniature, self-contained world which aspires to stand for everything ‘new’. It is an artistic community of would-be writers and lower middle-class clerks, all labouring to ‘express themselves’ intellectually. Unfortunately Hannay’s ironic treatment of the malaises of

modernism falls outside the scope of this thesis but one thing is very clear. Their efforts are misdirected and instead of their pretentious self-indulgence they should serve their country. Their feeble efforts at innovation are no match for tradition, as is made abundantly clear when Hannay discovers the pleasures of reading the classics:

I discovered for the first time what a pleasure was to be got from old books. They recalled and amplified that vision I had seen from the Cotswolds ridge, the revelation of the priceless heritage which is England. I imbibed a mighty quantity of history, but especially I liked the writers, like Walton, who got at the very heart of the English countryside. (MS 18)

Symptomatically, the countryside which he lovingly explores every afternoon is of no interest to the modernists, his neighbours. Though they seek 'reality' and 'life' and 'truth', their vision is urban and thus misses the bigger, patriotic truth:

If you talked to them about that divine countryside, you found they didn't give a rap for it and had never been a mile beyond the village. But they admired greatly the sombre effect of a train going into Marylebone station on a rainy day. (MS 20)

Hannay's adversary in the book is Graf von Schwabing, a German super-spy whose formidable mind and organisation skills are behind the planned German offensive in the spring of 1918. He is also his rival in love, as is Lancelot Wake, the pacifist. Hannay's courtship of Mary within this framework is full of symbolism. If Mary stands for England, the three men respectively represent three destinies that are open to her. Wake is of sound character and proves himself to be hero material, but he is too intellectual, fretting instead of taking action and when he does on the Col of the Swallows, despite his stoic heroism on the glacier, it is Hannay who proves the superior man for his fighting spirit is stronger. A man of action and enterprise, he with sheer determination overcomes all obstacles and is the one who metes out punishment to his foreign adversary Schwabing in the end. Hannay in his courtship is tongue-tied and shy in the typical British fashion, while Schwabing is a veritable silver-tongue. He affects the perfect gentlemanly manners and uses his gifts of persuasion to lure Mary to go over to Germany's side. If we wish we can see embodied by two Hannay's rivals two potentially harmful ways of dealing with Germany in the context of war, both resolutely discarded by Mary. Wake would stand for the pacifist way of too much arguing and talk instead of resolute action, the view he is brought around to share in the end. Schwabing might embody the corrosive lure of German propaganda which might dissuade England to open talks or make concessions, for he so completely fools all the allies in the book that they are taken completely by surprise when he abducts Mary who had thought herself the clever party. Schwabing outwits all his opponents but is shown in the end to lack true courage. Hannay, Mary's true love, possesses this quality in abundance. An honest, straightforward soldier, he proves his credentials in

battle in her defence and wins her hand. They settle at Fosse Manor after the war and the fighting man turns into a model country squire.

In *The Three Hostages* this sanest of men has to deal with the insanities of the postwar world. This time he has to defeat a megalomaniac Irishman who embodies the irrational hatred and drifting rootlessness of displaced communities who have no longer any place they can call their true home. Hannay himself is eminently rooted. His romance with 'Old England' has only deepened. We sense some of Buchan's own excitement of settling down in the Cotswolds after the war in Hannay's almost breathless adoration of the place. M. Girouard has pointed to this country house romanticism in Buchan's books, a quality he shares with some other middle class authors of the period (1978: 302). The reverent way he approaches his everyday duties as a squire, his new passion for country history, his desire to merge into the landscape, to become one with its thousand years of history puts him on the side of tradition as opposed to the forces of disruption. In this role he is representative of the new class of custodians of the English countryside which had emerged before the war and was to strengthen its hold in the interwar period – the middle-class professionals. Deriving their incomes from industry or commerce, they could afford to ignore the production aspect of country life and treat their estates as a private recreation ground. The old aristocratic families deriving their income from land had been hit hard by agricultural depression and the erosion of their power base by taxation and legislation in the last decades of the nineteenth century and were in irreversible decline. They were increasingly forced to sell and the new owners of their houses and estates could be selective in their pursuits. The aristocracy as a class may have been in decline but their lifestyle continued to fascinate those further down the social scale. Aristocratic leisure provided the *beau ideal* of the new country dwellers. R. Strong has observed:

The new generation of landed estate owners were living according to a new shared collective cultural ideal, where the English country squire, whose pursuit of leisure, commitment to political service and cultivation of style set the highest standards within the framework provided by the country house and garden.

The making of money and the unpleasant manual aspects of industrial production had no place in this idyllic system. The professional classes – lawyers, doctors, public officials and men-of-letters – tried to cast themselves according to a model of gentry living which had become increasingly economically and politically redundant. (1999: 39)

In the last two Hannay-books, *The Three Hostages* and *The Island of Sheep*, the interest has shifted from adventure to atmosphere. The intrigue is only a pretext for describing the pleasures of various aristocratic sports. This is the middle-class world which has elevated sport to myth and attends the rituals with religious devotion. Salmon and sea-trout fishing, shooting geese, stalking deer, walking and climbing, the ancient art of falconry and the modern thrill of racing the car, watching birds and flying an occasional plane are the pleasures which

supplement the sheer good luck of owning an estate and attending to its needs. Villains come and go but the bastion of rural England for Hannay will remain inviolable. This is an enchanted world of modern romance where modernity and industry are deliberately kept at bay, hierarchies are intact and privilege unquestioned. It is a vision of a mythical English Arcadia which was perfectly in tune with the homely conservatism of the interwar years the chief spokesperson of which was the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin himself. It was a concerted effort on the part of those who espoused it to provide a focus of unity for a divided nation and Buchan never wavered once he had set on this course. It is a vision which sustains all his books set in England between the wars.

Launcelot Wake (*Mr. Standfast*)

If there is a character in Buchan whose both names are redolent with meaning then it must be Launcelot Wake. A dedicated yet unhappy lover who awakens to his true calling and becomes the most exemplary of soldiers, a man of highest principle and complete integrity who does not fit in and remains forever an outsider by choice, he is a variation on the iron dreamers we have encountered earlier adapted to the circumstances of the later war years. He is a latter-day knight, a true namesake of his famous Arthurian predecessor who must yield his loved one to a better man who as his superior officer finds him the best of his subordinates and in whose service he gives up his life. Even the original Launcelot's final madness is there but no trace of adultery. In this he is truly a Victorian knight.

Wake is a conscientious objector and it is remarkable in retrospect how kindly and with what equanimity Buchan has treated him in *Mr. Standfast*, a book dedicated to the exploration of various forms of patriotism, considering the general hostility to 'conchies' which prevailed in society, especially after the introduction of conscription in early 1916 for unmarried men and later in the year for all men. To many they were unprincipled 'shirkers' who just wanted to save their skins. Buchan offers a much more sympathetic analysis, though he does not obviously agree with their arguments. His argument is rather that there is a proper form of service for everyone – one has only to find it.

When we first encounter Wake, he is clearly searching. However, he is searching in the wrong places and not finding his heart's desire. And these places are wrong because instead of boosting his manliness, they undermine it. A manly man, he has got tangled up in effeminate company, much less principled than he is, and he has to wrest free of their influence in order to discover his own true self.

His character is presented to the reader through the filter of Richard Hannay's very manly gaze. He identifies Wake's condition upon their first

meeting by noting the pallor of his face, which he ascribes to indoor living, and the restlessness of the eyes.

I can best describe them by saying that they looked *hot* – not fierce or angry, but so restless that they seemed to ache physically and to want sponging with cold water. (MS 9)

In what seems to Hannay the unwholesome dining-room of Fosse Manor he just looks the common suburban type, an armchair radical who dabbles in modern art and unprofessional politics. He has never had a chance to put across his case for objecting to the war properly for, being a Civil Servant, he has not had a chance of testifying in court. This he seems to compensate by holding forth at dinner table. Hannay, an experienced soldier, finds his civilian criticism of war “idiotic” (MS 11) because it is uninformed. He is prepared take a more generous view of his “balderdash” (*ibid.*) because he has a mission to infiltrate the pacifist community but there is no sympathy, for Wake seems to be lacking conviction:

He was a perfectly honest crank, but not a fanatic, for he wasn’t sure of himself. He had somehow lost his self-respect and was trying to argue himself back into it. He had considerable brains, for the reasons he gave for differing from most of his countrymen were good so far as they went. I shouldn’t have cared to take him on in public argument. If you had told me about such a fellow a week before I should have been sick at the thought of him. But now I didn’t dislike him. I was bored by him and I was also tremendously sorry for him. You could see he was as restless as a hen. (MS 11–12)

That he is not quite hopeless though but has potential the reader can infer from the start, as we are told that he has covered the ten miles from the station on his bicycle and that he has come to the area to fish. This makes Hannay like him somewhat better, for he appears a kind of sportsman, but he at this stage writes Wake off as “that cadaverous young prig” (MS 13), doubtless partly because he has spotted a rival interest in Mary Lamington.

In the inane pacifist community of Biggleswick where spiritual pride and vanity are the chief motivating forces and self-indulgence is the norm Wake stands out somewhat by arguing his case clearly “as a first-class lawyer” (MS 23) but at this stage he is still part of the crowd of pretentious fools who seem to fail to appreciate his powers fully, for his first-class speech at the village hall receives just a moderate applause. That there is potential but it is misapplied is conveyed by Hannay’s diagnosis that of all the academic anarchists in Biggleswick he is the only one capable of real action:

He has the makings of a fanatic, and he’s the more dangerous because you can see his conscience is uneasy. I can fancy him bombing a Prime Minister merely to quiet his own doubts. (MS 31)

The suburban environment, that feared underminer of manliness and vigour in Victorian and Edwardian England, has both distorted Wake's true character and Hannay's perception of it. The moment of truth predictably comes out of doors, in the elemental world of rock and sky when Hannay goes to stalk the German spies on the Isle of Skye and accidentally meets there Wake who has come to climb the rocks, for he turns out to be a mountaineer. What is more, he reveals himself to be a patriot when Hannay takes him for a German conspirator and shows a true manly spirit by lashing out at him with his fists. This spirited manifestation of physical courage alters the picture immediately, though it is marred by the residue of fear, betrayed by Wake's chattering teeth. However, Wake's angry defiance clinches the matter for Hannay that he is not a German collaborator and his sportsmanlike spirit when joining him in his plans to uncover the German plot makes his acceptance complete. When Wake volunteers to climb the rock tower to help him spot the coming of the German submarine, Hannay can give free rein to his admiration of the man's climbing skills, now that he knows that the wiry vigour and purposefulness he had spotted earlier were not in the service of the enemy. The man he had taken for "a conceited *flâneur*" (MS 84) turns out to be a passionate sportsman who, like all true Romantic heroes, is more at ease among rocks than in the modern dining-room. His transformation before Hannay's eyes is also aided by his use of hard language when speaking about the traitors but it is not yet complete, for he relapses into his old priggishness when speaking about his pacifism:

He was as touchy about his blessed principles as an old maid about her age. /.../
His face was like a gargoyle as we went down to the beach to bathe, so I held my tongue. He was chewing the cud of his wounded pride. (MS 89)

However, a cleansing bathe in the sea dispels any remaining grudge and when he has ascertained the presence in the little cove of the German submarine the night before his inhibitions disappear. He reveals himself as a first-rate sportsman, his great love of the outdoors conclusively proving his credentials of a true gentleman. Besides, he does not boast:

He was a different-sized fellow out on the hills from the anaemic intellectual of Biggleswick. He had forgotten his beastly self-consciousness, and spoke of his hobby with a serious passion. It seemed he had scrambled about everywhere in Europe, from the Caucasus to the Pyrenees. I could see he must be good at the job, for he didn't brag of his exploits. It was the mountains that he loved, not wriggling his body up hard places. The Coolin, he said, were his favourites, for on some of them you could get two thousand feet of good rock. We got our glasses on the face of Sgurr Alasdair, and he sketched out for me various ways of getting to its grim summit. The Coolin and the Dolomites for him, for he had grown tired of the Chamonix *aiguilles*. I remember he described with tremendous gusto the joys of early dawn in Tyrol, when you ascended through acres of flowery meadows to a tooth of clean white limestone against a clean blue sky. (MS 90)

He even confides his reason for hating the war. He has made friends with a German guide in Bavaria and does not want to fight against a comrade.

His transformation into a soldier begins there and then for he gets an assignment from Hannay, whom he does not suspect of being a general, to deliver a message to the headquarters. His peevishness is completely gone, for he can banter with Hannay about the serious business of the previous night in the proper gentlemanly tone, which establishes him as Hannay's equal as a sportsman:

You're not a bad fellow, but you've landed me in a melodrama for the first time in my sober existence. I have a grudge against you for mixing up the Coolin with a shilling shocker. You've spoiled their sanctity. (MS 91)

A student of chivalry will have noted that Wake has travelled widely on the Continent and that through Hannay's person he has entered into the military service of the state. Wake's namesake in the Arthurian cycle was a questing knight who had made his name on the Continent and was employed by Arthur for his excellence. He also fell in love with Arthur's queen but could never hope to make her his own. In remorse he buried himself in the hardest of trials of strength and endurance, occasionally returning to Arthur's court where he devoted his service to the queen. With this in mind Wake's war career takes on an added dimension.

Hannay and the reader next encounter him in a labour company on the western front. He has not given up his principles and is still a non-combatant but he has buried himself in the anonymity of the working party where he seems to relish the hard physical toil and lowly company, so out of line with his usual environment. He hides his resentment of Hannay the fortunate lover of Mary behind bitter, self-deprecating irony, playfully downplaying the hardness of his job and only in retrospect it becomes clear that when he speaks about not having enough courage to be a combatant or having chosen the fresh air and exercise as self-indulgence, the complete opposite is true. This is self-mortification and the reason becomes clear when, upon hearing that Hannay and Mary are about to marry, in an uncharacteristic bout of hysteria he reveals the profundity of his love. The reader will recall that in Tennyson's version of the legend Arthur was the staid man of duty while Launcelot was the man of imagination and romantic flair. In this light Wake's outburst makes complete sense:

Good Lord, man, you'll murder her soul. You an ordinary, stupid, successful fellow, and she – she's the most precious thing God ever made. You can never understand the fraction of her preciousness, but you'll clip her wings all right. She can never fly now ... (MS 169)

In the legendary cycle there is an episode in which Launcelot saves Guinevere from the clutches of the treacherous suitor and we find Wake doing the same, similarly yielding her to the better man afterwards. In *Mr. Standfast* this scene is

played out on the Col of the Swallows which the two men have to climb in order to save Mary from the villain of the book. Wake the mountaineer leads Hannay the novice through an ice-bound pass in their pursuit and must concede Hannay's superiority, for though his skill is superior in climbing the glacier, Hannay's strength of character proves stronger, so Wake travels the last miles on Hannay's back. There is a strong element of self-sacrifice here present, for Wake does all the step-cutting, thus sparing Hannay the exertion, and begs to be left on the hillside not to hinder his progress, for this is no time for competition. Nevertheless, Hannay's love proves stronger and urges him on, so Wake must be left behind to recuperate and cannot be in on the finish. The enormity of this feat of endurance is duly recognized by Hannay who calls him a hero.

A knight is a soldier first and foremost and this is Wake's manifest destiny from the start, no matter how much he may rail against it. It is in his bones and Hannay recognizes this quality immediately but Wake himself refuses to admit it by insisting on his status of an outsider. What he volunteers about his character strongly reinforces the parallels with the Victorian version of Launcelot, especially in what concerns the latter's relation to his king. Wake and Hannay become good friends, like the king and his good vassal in the legend, Wake freely admitting Hannay's superiority, especially in matters of love. The mental agonies of Tennyson's Launcelot come strongly to mind when Wake casts Hannay as the exemplary family man and himself as the perennial outsider:

'Don't think I was ever your rival. I would no more have proposed to Mary than I would have married one of her aunts. She was so sure of herself, so happy in her single-heartedness that she terrified me. My type of man is not meant for marriage, for women must be in the centre of life, and we must always be standing aside and looking on. It was a damnable thing to be born left-handed.'

'The trouble about you, my dear chap,' I said, 'is that you're too hard to please.'

'That's one way of putting it. I should put it more harshly. I hate more than I love. All we humanitarians and pacifists have hatred as our mainspring. Odd, isn't it, for people who preach brotherly love? But it's the truth. We're full of hate towards everything that doesn't square in with our ideas, everything that jars on our ladylike nerves. Fellows like you are so in love with their cause that they've no time or inclination to detest what thwarts them. We've no cause – only negatives and that means hatred, and self-torture, and a beastly jaundice of soul.' (MS 187–188)

This agony is clearly Carlylean, the result of too much introspection and a tender conscience:

'I see more than other people see,' he went on, 'and I feel more. That's the curse on me. You're a happy man and you get things done, because you only see one side of the case, one thing at a time. How would you like it if a thousand strings were always tugging at you, if you saw that every course meant the sacrifice of

lovely and desirable things, or even the shattering of what you know to be unreplaceable? I'm the kind of stuff poets are made of, but I haven't the poet's gift, so I stagger about the world left-handed and game-legged... Take the war. For me to fight would be worse than for another man to run away. From the bottom of my heart I believe that it needn't have happened, and that all war is a blistering iniquity. And yet belief has got very little to do with virtue. I'm not as good a man as you, Hannay, who have never thought out anything in your life. My time in the Labour battalion taught me something. I knew that with all my fine aspirations I wasn't as true a man as fellows whose talk was silly oaths and who didn't care a tinker's curse about their souls. (MS 188)

The Carlylean remedy for doubt was work and though Wake raves on about his unfitness, as an individualist, for service, Hannay and the reader can see clearly that he has already found the remedy for his condition. He is eager to serve his country but the true form of that service, his proper work, has eluded him. Should that be found, his suffering would be over. As Hannay succinctly puts it:

'We're going to break you to harness, Wake, and then you'll be a happy man. You keep your mind on the game and forget about yourself. That's the cure for jibbers.' (MS 189)

True service in the Carlylean sense is self-abnegating and transcends personal happiness. Thus the realization of what constitutes his proper calling can come only after Wake has acquiesced to the union of his loved one with another. Recognition of the finality of his loss of Mary to Hannay frees him from the earthly ties, though his adherence to both remains strong. Remaining true to his pacifist principles, he takes up soldiering without carrying a weapon by becoming a private soldier who carries Hannay's messages to the headquarters. Thus he retains his status as an outsider looking in on the action and can yet offer personal service to Hannay and more widely to his country. His chosen rank, for he could have been an officer if he had so desired, is symptomatic of his deep humility, both a Christian and chivalric virtue. Earlier Hannay had been relieved to notice that his fault is not "spiritual pride" (MS 188) which would relieve Wake from the taint of the sin of worldliness. Indeed, in his last days Wake would attain such an elevated state of otherworldliness that to others less exalted he appears mad. This was Lancelot's way of coping with his loss of Guinevere but there is also a strong dose of the spiritual single-mindedness of Galahad in Wake's 'feyness'. He seems to have put all earthly concerns behind him, as if he were already moving in higher realms of experience. Hannay, the experienced soldier, becomes concerned:

He was the opposite of shell-shocked, if you understand me. He had never been properly under fire before, but he didn't give a straw for it. I had known the same thing with other men, and they generally ended by crumpling up, for it isn't natural that five or six feet of human flesh shouldn't be afraid of what can torture and destroy it. The natural thing is to be always a little scared, like me, but by an effort of the will and attention to work to contrive to forget it. But Wake

apparently never gave it a thought. He wasn't foolhardy, only indifferent. He used to go about with a smile on his face, a smile of contentment. Even the horrors – and we had plenty of them – didn't affect him. His eyes, which used to be hot, had now a curious open innocence like Peter's. I would have been happier if he had been a little rattled. (MS 265)

When asked about it, he speaks about the ancient cult of *Mayna Mater*, the Great Mother, whose votaries have to pass through a bath of blood for their souls to be reborn:

I think I am passing through that bath. I think that like the initiate I shall be *renatus in aeternum* – reborn in the eternal. (Ibid.)

Now that all worldly cares have been left behind, his true vocation – to be a soldier – can fully manifest itself.

One of the peculiarities of fighting on the Western Front was the great difficulty posed by the inadequate means of communication. The depth of the front line which removed the command from the firing line, the elaborate topography of the network of trenches, the constant barrage which destroyed telegraph lines and endangered the life of messengers, all this made communication in battle extremely tenuous. In actual battle situations carefully laid plans tended to crumble and people on the spot were left to improvise. The headquarters, far in the rear, could do very little to directly influence the events in the battle zone once an offensive had been launched. It was even worse under enemy attack when the situation changed even more quickly. The last part of *Mr. Standfast* gives a dramatic picture of the realities of trench warfare during the German spring offensive of 1918. Buchan has placed his heroes in the main line of German attack on the Somme and shows the near chaos which followed the German breach of the allied defences when Germany's elite forces annihilated the British Fifth Army and almost destroyed the Third. In such extreme conditions Wake as a soldier comes into his own:

He knew nothing of military affairs before, but he got the hang of this rough-and-tumble fighting as if he had been born for it. He never fired a shot; he carried no arms; the only weapons he used were his brains. And they were the best conceivable. I never met a staff officer who was so quick at getting a point or at sizing up a situation. He had put his back into the business, and first-class talent is not common anywhere. (MS 266)

This is reinforced by a General Staff Officer remarking that Wake seems to be the only one who can figure out what is going on. When Hannay's division is to be cut off by a German flanking movement and he needs to send an urgent message to the Corps Headquarters for help, Wake volunteers to swim the river to put their desperate case to the higher command. He is the ideal messenger, as he knows the situation as well as Hannay himself. In a supreme act of courage he swims across the river to the divisional headquarters under machine-gun fire, gets hit in the groin but insists on delivering his message. He refuses to have his

wound attended to before he has completed his mission. Bleeding internally and past help, he asks to be taken back to his battle line so that he can report to Hannay personally. Having knowingly sacrificed his life for his country in war, he has found peace.

Vernon Milburne (*The Dancing Floor*)

The story of Vernon Milburne's prophetic dream and its culmination with a rescue of a girl from a Greek island first appeared as a short story 'Basilissa' in 1914. As M. Deegan (1997: xii) has pointed out, it is in many ways more satisfying than the later novel *The Dancing Floor* into which it has been incorporated almost wholly, not least in its mythical aspect. Vernon, who in the short story has some Greek blood, decides to pay a visit to his grandmother's country and arrives on a Greek island just in time to rescue a maiden from savage islanders who want to sacrifice her to their pagan gods. She calls him Perseus and he addresses her as Andromeda and the local hillman who pursues her, the monstrous Vlastos, has to be fought and vanquished. An obvious reworking of the ancient legend for modern times, it highlights some interesting aspects of Victorian chivalry.

J. A. Kestner (1995: 65–79) has shown that the legend of Perseus was one of the most important classically-inspired gender models in Victorian England, lovingly interpreted by writers and painters alike. He offers a number of interesting insights into the treatment of the legend which are of interest too when considering both Buchan's short story and the subsequent novel. The most powerful myth of heroic rescue in Victorian culture, Perseus's feat of slaying the gorgon Medusa and then the dragon who had imprisoned Andromeda was given an inevitable gloss by the period's anxieties and concerns. Perseus's mythic rite of passage to mature masculinity was not without its sexual ambiguities. Perseus's mother Danaë, imprisoned and abandoned by her father for fear of her offspring, had been impregnated by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold. Her sexuality in need of containment and the gold involved in the intercourse turned Danaë into the archetypal prostitute. An even darker sexual threat was embodied by the petrifying gaze of Medusa, interpreted by post-Freudian scholars in the light of the castration complex. The hero triumphantly asserts his masculinity by containing and effectively disarming the gorgon whose severed head can be seen as standing for both the male and female sexual organs. The enchained and helpless Andromeda awaiting rescue, sexually pure and ready for marriage, is the classical damsel in distress, a reward for phallic male heroism, contested between men. But she can also be seen, as A. Munich points out (1989: 28), as wild, untamed nature as opposed to culture embodied by the male in the classical nineteenth-century dichotomy of nature versus civilization. The Perseus myth gained additional

force by being interpreted by some of the greatest artists of the day, often more than once. As Kestner remarks, the myth, throughout the century, was presented with “startling frequency” (1999: 66) on the walls of the Royal Academy and other leading galleries. Interestingly, the two future presidents of the Royal Academy, E. Poynter and F. Leighton, who contributed to the flow of canvases depicting aspects of the myth, in their versions chose to omit Medusa’s head as the vital instrument of subduing the dragon, preferring to concentrate on pure male heroism. Leighton, especially, turns Perseus into the then fashionable solar hero by collating Perseus and Bellerophon, the slayer of the Chimera. This is especially manifest in his *Perseus and Andromeda* of 1891 where Perseus, the Aryan, Apollonian rationalist warrior, is placed in a brilliant sunburst above the crouching dragon whose spread wings have consigned Andromeda to primeval darkness embodied by the twilight wildness of the gorge where she is trapped. The virginal whiteness of her flesh and robe highlight her natural innocence uncorrupted by her evil surroundings.

All this may seem far-fetched when considering Vernon Milburne’s mission on the island of Plakos but a closer examination of the novel especially will reveal some startling implications not without parallel with how the myth was interpreted in the figurative arts.

In ‘Basilissa’, which is a straightforward rescue story, Vernon the knight in shining armour rescues the maiden in distress from a prospective molester. His coming has been awaited like that of a deliverer, the girl having been imprisoned in her house for two years by the savage people of her island, led by their warlord Vlastos who desires to make her his own. Vernon’s credentials, marking him instantly out as the long-awaited saviour, is that he is an Englishman and a gentleman. She is virginal and pure, while Vlastos is the very Devil incarnate. He is variously described as a wild beast, a caveman and a monster who has nearly managed to gobble her up. Vernon, who has some experience of fighting with wild beasts, having killed a leopard with his bare hands on one of his African trips, is not afraid to take Vlastos on. It is a contest of sheer physical force, the rational, civilized foreigner with the superior moral fortitude on his side defeating the incoherent, savage primitives embodied by their leader and carrying off their princess as his prize. The story is given its mythical dimension by having the girl state that she has been waiting for her deliverer since the beginning of the world.

The Dancing Floor incorporates the whole dream sequence of the short story but reworks the story’s end. Like in ‘Basilissa’, Vernon has been yearly dreaming a prophetic dream of a mysterious house where doors open to reveal a sequence of rooms, every one of which will bring him nearer to the revelation of some unfathomable purpose behind his dream, a moment when he is to accomplish something for which he is predestined. He is a Calvinist and this persistent reminder of a special destiny being shaped for him inspires him to perfect all his faculties to be ready to meet the challenge when it comes. The

result is a perfect English gentleman, a little aloof and ascetic perhaps but gracious and amiable, an excellent sportsman with a figure to match – in short “an evangelical athlete with the looks of Apollo” (DF 12). He is an amalgam of Christian chivalry and classical learning, having taken the best from both worlds. His Evangelical upper middle class background makes him especially intolerant of vice. His gracious good looks and gentle courtesy make him popular but a certain brooding austerity keeps his admirers at a respectful distance. He does not drink, abhors loose talk and is remarkably intolerant of youthful follies. His training is completed by the war which, as befits a modern knight, he starts by joining the Yeomanry, i.e. a voluntary cavalry force. He has a distinguished war record, having been wounded in the Gallipoli campaign and in Palestine, ending the war as a battalion commander. A first-class officer, he is too reserved to be widely popular, his fellow officer describing him at this stage as “Sir Galahad crossed with the low-church parson and the ‘Varsity don” (DF 36). Vernon’s identification with Galahad is implicitly carried over into the post-war years. Like that ideal youth he never seems to age, the war having hardly left any mark in his face. Convinced of his special destiny, he has not allowed mundane incidents of the war to shake his unearthly composure. Instead he has acquired a kind of *rarefied* look:

He had lost nothing of his youth, indeed he scarcely looked his twenty-five years; but he had been fined down and tautened and tested, so that his face had a new spirituality in it as if there was a light shining behind it. (DF 46)

The post-war craze of jollity and forgetfulness leaves him untouched. Like Galahad, he is impervious to the temptations of the flesh and earthly matters generally, uncompanionable like a hermit and contemptuous of the sporting and amorous ventures of his contemporaries. Even the obvious attractions of Koré Arabin, the girl he is later to rescue on Plakos, encountered outside the context of his dream-world and classical scholarship leaves him unmoved. Convinced of his higher destiny, he cherishes his dream like a kind of Grail.

When blown by the storm to the Greek island of Plakos, his Christian fortitude will be complemented by Apollonian magnificence. This is mediated for us by Leithen who sees him compete in a race with local Greek youths, Vernon’s classically inspired athletic prowess honed at English public school and university leaving the natives in the shade. By implication he is the true inheritor of classical Greece, “a noble figure of youth who might have stepped from a Parthenon frieze” (DF 146). To Leithen who does not recognize him in disguise, he looks like “some young Apollo of the great age of art” (DF 147), a “beautiful young barbarian” (DF 146) whose victory has allotted him the task of carrying out the gruesome ceremony of human sacrifice.

The community Vernon has stumbled on in this remote island is in the grip of primeval passions. They blame their bad harvests on the evil brought to the island by Koré’s father and intend to burn her as a witch to cleanse their village.

In the novel Vernon is never directly referred to as Perseus or Koré as Andromeda but the core of the myth is nevertheless present. Vernon as a classical scholar is uniquely placed to defeat the islanders with their own heathen magic. Having studied the ancient rituals of sacrifice he is in a better position to know what is going to happen than the islanders themselves to whom it is only a vague memory. Thus he can turn his knowledge to his own advantage, rationality overcoming blind superstition. The evil the Apollonian hero who commands the secrets of knowledge and art has to contend with is truly immense, not to say monstrous. The monster that holds captive the virtuous maiden Koré is her own past. She is a prisoner in her house which is testimony to the bestiality of depraved human nature which in turn has ignited the spark of bestiality in the villagers. As can be expected from the cluster of meanings surrounding the Perseus-Andromeda myth, the depravity contaminating Plakos is of the sexual kind. It appears that Koré grandfather had been an associate of Byron, Shelley and Landor, all known for their unconventional sexual practices. Their excesses are taken further by Koré's father, a reckless profligate who turned his island home into "a resort for the rascality of Europe" (DF 44) over which he ruled as "a connoisseur and high priest of uttermost evil" (DF 45). Leithen knows the evil only by hearsay but Vernon sees it with his own eyes when he is invited to the house by Koré servants with a plea to rescue their mistress. Even before he meets Koré, he becomes aware of the "carnival of bestiality" (DF 169) staring at him from the frescoes on the walls, the obscene statuary decorating the rooms and pornography to be found on the shelves. Yet all this filth has not touched Koré, whose incontestable purity is signalled by her attempts to cleanse the house by whitewashing the rooms. Her white fashionable evening dress in which she ultimately reveals herself to her islanders in England where it is out of context and where Christian virtue is by implication uncontested had seemed barbarous and provocative in its sensuality. On Plakos, amidst darkest evil, it is revealed as a symbol of what Leithen calls 'mailed virginity':

True purity, I thought, whether in woman or man, was something far more than the narrow sex thing which was the common notion of it. It meant keeping oneself, as the Bible says, altogether unspotted from the world, free from all tyranny and stain, whether of flesh or spirit, defying the universe to touch even the outworks of the sanctuary which is one's soul. It must be defiant, not the inert fragile crystal, but the supple shining sword. Virginity meant nothing unless it was mailed, and I wondered whether we were not coming to a better understanding of it. The modern girl, with all her brashness, had the gallantry of a free woman. She was a crude Artemis, but her feet were on the hills. Was the blushing, sheltered maid of our grandmother's day no more than an untempted Aphrodite? (DF 213)

Though her spirit is free and she refuses Vernon's offer to save her despite herself, in her determination to face the danger alone, brave and independent as

that might be, she is virtually as helpless in her house which has been turned into a prison as Andromeda chained to her rock. She may protest as much as she likes that she is no maiden in distress in need of rescue by a modern knight errant, it is nevertheless the fact that she is ultimately rescued by exactly this kind of gentleman, though he refuses to think of himself as such. However, this being a modern romance, she is not without initiative in the matter and is given the role of the mastermind of the escape plan. Being an educated English girl, and her knight an educated classical scholar, they turn the tables on the barbarous islanders by appearing to them as their pagan gods, breaking the spell of superstition and sending them penitent back to their orthodox church.

It is of considerable interest, if we recall the civilization-nature dichotomy embodied for the Victorians by the couple Perseus and Andromeda, that Koré in the novel is associated by the islanders with Persephone–Demeter, i.e. the re-creative forces of nature. Though inherently pure, she appears wild and untamed to the cultured Englishmen who only gradually perceive the natural innocence behind the unsophisticated façade. Of special interest here is Leithen’s changing viewpoint, for he alone knows her background. Upon first seeing her dancing in a gaudy nightclub, he perceives her natural grace and “an absurd innocence” (DF 49) behind her heavy paint and vulgar fashionable accoutrements. On the next occasion during a hunt she is revealed as domineering and masterful, her arrogant nonchalance bordering on deliberate rudeness, eliciting from Leithen the epithet “barbaric”. She casts an extraordinary spell over men, a green (sic!) evening dress revealing her singular beauty. Despite her obvious allure, she appears utterly sexless, being likened by Leithen to a wild boy. She can be seen as a knight in her own right who has accepted the challenge from fate to clear her name of the atrocities committed by predecessors. For her it is a duty and a point of honour to atone for her father’s devilry. She is a kind of female equivalent of Galahad, especially when we consider that knight’s background as the illegitimate son of Lancelot who spent his life trying to atone for his father’s sins. This Christian chivalric aspect is well noted by Leithen who comments on Vernon’s and Koré inherent affinity, both having a similar strain of romance in them. Like Vernon is a Christian knight and a classical scholar, so does Koré combine in her person the Christian knight and a pagan goddess. And like Vernon’s Apollonian aspect is revealed only on Plakos, so is her symbolic aspect as the archetypal Virgin her name Koré denotes. As Vernon explains to Leithen at the very beginning of the book, the Greeks, before they adopted the pantheon of Olympic gods, had only one goddess – “the mistress of wild things” (DF 29) – the priestess of the new birth in spring. Known under a succession of names – Demeter, Aphrodite, Hera, Artemis, Athena the Mailed Virgin of the Acropolis – her associations were with fecundity and fertility. As Koré appears to the natives at the climax of the Spring Festival in her white dress with Vernon at her side against the backdrop of her burning house, to the stunned islanders and marvelling Leithen she is Persephone incarnate – “*the*

Koré, the immortal maiden, who brings to earth its annual redemption” (DF 209). Vernon-Perseus-Apollo has proved his masculinity by passing through a baptism of fire and is ready to assume mature manly responsibilities he had put off during his long vigil. He has also conquered and subdued the irrationality of nature and femininity by having tamed the islanders and their wild pagan spirit embodied by Koré. By removing her from her island he has freed her but also mastered her, having assumed the traditional male role of protector while she is prepared to exchange her hard virginal independence for the meek submissiveness of a wife.

Alastair Maclean (*Midwinter*)

Buchan’s passionate affiliation with ‘Old England’ after he had opted to put down his roots in the Cotswolds was to inspire three historical romances which mirror, each in its own way, his deepening identification with his new homeland. *Midwinter*, the first of the three, can be read as a quest for the true meaning of ‘Old England’, for greater effect rendered through the eyes of a hostile and prejudiced Scot. In *A Blanket of the Dark* the protagonist is the embodiment of the true spirit of ‘Old England’ and his quest for identity explores the delusions and mirages which detract him on his way to the full realisation of what he is. With his English half of identity more secure, Buchan in *The Three Fishers* undertakes to compare playfully the respective merits of England and Scotland, rendered through the conflicting characters of its two protagonists.

Alastair Maclean in *Midwinter* comes to England in 1745 on a secret mission from Bonnie Prince Charlie. Like his prince, he has never set foot in England before and is full of prejudices and misconceptions. He is to glean the true extent of English support for the planned invasion from the north and to enlist prominent English nobles to his cause. In this, his official quest, he will fail. Instead, the journey into the heart of England will turn into a personal quest of meaning, enabling him in the end to put the Jacobite rebellion properly into the English context and realize its hopeless futility.

Alastair is nobly born but comes from a culture which is more archaic and much poorer than England. A professional soldier from a poor Highland glen, he has seen life at the courts of Europe but never experienced secure prosperity. His world is clear and simple, centring on his service of his native prince. His mental landscape is as untroubled by complexity as his native Highlands where both hierarchies and landmarks stand out clear and strong.

His growing perplexity when entering England is rendered, as is common with Buchan, through landscape and weather. Buchan took greater pains with his historical romances than the modern ‘shockers’ and besides period research into the appropriate material background and language, they are more carefully

crafted to give them additional layers of meaning. In *Midwinter* we meet the same kind of attention to backdrops to action as in his first novels, the Romantic correspondence between landscape and mood being firmly in place.

As the title implies, his is a journey into a cold and dark land which would be hostile to his person and cause. For him it is a quest into wilderness the mores of the inhabitants of which he will continually misread. His growing confusion and irritation with the foreignness around him is wonderfully rendered by the opening scene where he gets lost in the homely landscape of Oxfordshire. Used to conspiracy and the roadless wilds of his native Highlands where the hillsides provide little camouflage but the shape of the open terrain provides clear landmarks and ways of escape for a man in a hurry, Alastair flounders miserably when he tries to exercise his fieldcraft in England. He gets entangled in what to him is a pathless jungle of shrubbery and undergrowth. This is only proper for he stands for the forces of impending confusion of lawlessness to be unleashed in England and the roads used by law-abiding Englishmen are denied to him. Though he thinks himself lost, he has stumbled by accident on the real England and significantly this England is revealed to him the moment he forgets his secret mission of enlisting support for the rebellion and gives reign to his natural impulse of chivalry. He steps in on behalf of a poaching urchin being punished by a gamekeeper and thus earns his entry into 'Old England'. His high-mindedness and reluctance to bribe the gamekeeper into showing him the way, occasioned in no small part by the scarcity of his funds, allow him the privileged glimpse of the true spirit of England for which he would in vain search in aristocratic houses and which his fellow-conspirators will never discover. This is the mythical, ancient spirit of the land which has nothing to do with governments and kings. In the novel it is given visible form in the company of the Naked Men whose spokesperson is a mysterious man called Midwinter. He is a gentleman who has given up a career befitting his station to dwell among the inhabitants of 'Old England'. He is something of a philosopher and a sage and is shown at heart to be a Jacobite, the implication being that true England is for the true line of kings. What prevents affiliation proper and makes Alastair's mission hopeless is that this England lacks wealth and power and is not interested in war. The land has its own laws and seasons and refuses to be troubled by the claims of princes and pretenders.

The England of wealth and power also desires peace. If the Naked Men of wild Otmoor can be taken to symbolize England in the state of nature, the England of manors and gardens fears the loss of the comforts of civilization which are alien and consequently irrelevant to Alastair's high idealism. This England is calculating and pragmatic and fails to stir to the pleas of abstract loyalty. The darker side to this stolid common sense is exhibited by the various greedy and grasping characters in the book, most glaringly by the bunch of villains who plan to use the uprising to their own ends by luring wealthy nobles into committing themselves to the cause and then exposing them as traitors to

the government, planning to take their share of the confiscated property when they come to trial.

Not only will Alastair fail in shaking England out of its apathy, his own sense of mission and purpose will also undergo a change. He who has come to test the mettle of England will be tested in turn by England. He can shrug off the lure of English luxury and ease but he cannot resist the temptation of love.

When Alastair first arrives in England his aims are simple and straightforward:

[H]e would carve with his sword and his wits a road to power, and make a surly world acknowledge him. Unselfish aims likewise filled his mind – a throne for his Prince, power for Clan Gillian, pride for his land and for his friends riches and love. (M 27)

In every single one of them he is destined to fail. These are ideals of an old heroic world England has outgrown, or as Midwinter warns him – “Old England has forgotten you” (M 24). England has prospered and Alastair has no arguments to bring to assault “the vast embattled fortress of ease” (M 28). Midwinter’s words had not convinced him, for the setting where they had been uttered had not been of his own class. When he comes to Lord Cornbury’s country seat amidst an extensive landscaped park, he gets his first pang of unease when he compares the respective lifestyles of the Scottish and English noblemen:

In his own country a gentleman’s house was a large bare stone tower, looking out on moor or sea, with a huddle of hovels round the door. To such dwellings men sat loose, as to a tent in a campaign. But the ordered amenities of such a mansion as this – the decent town at the gates richer than a city of Scotland, the acres of policies that warded the house from the vulgar eye, the secular trees, the air of long-descended peace – struck a chill to his hopes. What did a kestrel in the home of peacocks? (M 29)

The difference is underlined by Lord Cornbury’s sister, a Scottish Duchess. She is the embodiment of the new England of artificial pastoral where noblemen and women have ostensibly substituted a serious concern for the land with frolicking in an artfully contrived landscape as shepherds and shepherdesses. Significantly, she is a Scotswoman who has succumbed to the lure of English ease and has transformed herself into a modish shepherdess of fake simplicity of dress and manner. She and her brother have cut themselves off from real England by a park wall, a point emphatically made when she takes Alastair to the part of the park which has been turned into an artificial wilderness of grottos, midget Alps and miniature lakes and points to the real wilderness outside the gates. The controlled environment of this enclosed Eden and the “suave perfection” (M 34) of the house where the keynote is provided by the elegance of van Dyck portraits and the wider colonial interests of England signified by the exoticism of the new Indian Room, appear to Alastair

phantasmal and unreal. It is “a pretty pageant” (M 35) where the Duchess who is over forty chooses to play an ingénue as she drives around the park with her little equipage, a tableaux which could have stepped off the shelf of fashionable porcelain figurines. The grim world of honourable endeavour where a man readily responded to summons in the name of loyalty and religion is far from the daintiness and ease of this cushioned civilisation which has tasted the fruits of prosperity. The Duchess underscores this in one of the most memorable passages in the book when she and Alastair gaze at the wild landscape outside the park walls:

You have before you two worlds – the enclosed garden and the wild beyond. The wild is yours, by birthright and training and choice. Beyond the pale is Robin Hood’s land, where men adventure. Inside is a quiet domain where they make verses and read books and cherish possessions – my brother’s land. /.../ [Y]ou would persuade him to break bounds and leave his sanctuary for the wilds. It may be the manlier choice, but oh, sir, it is not for him. He is meant for the garden. His health is weak, his spirit is most noble but too fine for the clash of the rough world. In a year he would be in his grave. (M 38)

Alastair thinks himself immune to the illusory lure of the joys of this garden world, clinging to a mental picture of his native lochs and moors of the yet untamed Scotland:

The blood ran quicker in his veins for the sight of a drugged and sleeping world. Ancient possessions, the beauty of women, the joy of the senses were things to be forsworn before they could be truly admired. (M 39)

Alastair may have forgotten it but Eden was also a garden of the Temptation and Fall of Man and the reader will have been alerted to such possibilities in this English garden by the reiterated use of the imagery of the enclosed garden as such and Alastair’s growing unease when he tries to resist the allure of the place. The enclosed garden, besides being a replica of the Earthly Paradise, is also a traditional symbol of the incorruptible purity of the Virgin Mary and the locus of courtly love. When Alastair thinks his official mission in England completed, his real quest is only beginning. A maiden in distress needs rescuing. She is the lure of England in a different guise and will defeat his enterprise more effectively than any manly argument.

Alastair’s quest for love is full of irony and paradoxes. A change has occurred, a predictable one if we consider the disillusion with the spirit of chivalry which set in after the war, and it is most noticeable when we compare the treatment of love in *Midwinter* with *A Lost Lady of Old Years* written almost a quarter century earlier. Both books are set in 1745, in both the protagonist misses the main event but embarks on a quest of his own which tests him as a soldier and lover. Both end in failure and disillusion and the rival who claims the lady is manifestly inferior to the hero and unworthy of his sacrifice. The ladies in both are unthinking and callous in their seductiveness when enlisting

the help of the hero to do something or other for their unworthy husbands. In both books they are the cause of the hero's failure to fulfil his official mission as he gets distracted by their capricious demands. What is different is the tonality of the books. *A Lost Lady of the Old Years* traces the awakening of the noble spirit in a brutalised nature which through courtly love attains the highest perfection, the total self-abnegation in order to preserve the illusion of perfect pure love. The book is full of dark passion the sublimation of which into the abstract *fin' amors* is the hero's rite of passage. The book ends with the hero's complete renunciation of the self, the mark of his complete transformation from an irresponsible, unthinking boy into a man who knows his duty. Though the ending is grim, there is the moral uplift which transforms manifest defeat into actual victory. In comparison, *Midwinter* offers a spiritual journey which lacks both the tension and conviction of the earlier book. The hero's rite of passage is one of complete disillusion, the props which had sustained his heroic self-image all falling away, and instead of love, what sustains his spirit at the end is the friendship of a middle-class clerk. This is a complete reversal when compared to the earlier book where the hero had to break away from his middle-class background to undergo his heroic transformation.

Buchan's initial excitement upon first entering the aristocratic and upper middle class world has given place to a cooler appraisal. A collective picture which emerges of English aristocrats in the book is far from flattering. The cautious and pragmatic Lord Cornbury is supplemented by the drunken Squire Thickness, a Justice of the Peace whose name aptly sums up his mental powers. In a drunken stupor he leaves his ancient privilege and duty of administering justice to his manipulating minions. The impoverished relatives of Sir John Norreys embody crippled inefficiency and sterility, their ancient manor with the evocative name Brightwell, recalling former days of hope and glory, now overhung with the pall of death. It is presided over by two vulture-like spinsters who plot the downfall of their more fortunate peers, their sole overmastering passion being naked greed. Sir John Norreys himself fails even to measure up to make a decent villain being a coward and a fop. An even more gruesome picture emerges from the tales of the murderous gypsy who has been ordered to kill Alastair by throwing him into a whirlpool. It appears to be a handy method for the local lords of getting rid of unwanted offspring and discarded mistresses. This lawless world of upper-class crime is offset by the naïve and gullible Lady Norreys and her innocent and gauche tutor Samuel Johnson, two eternal children in a ruthlessly calculating adult world protected from harm by their unshaken idealism. They belong to a less complicated age of chivalrous endeavour and Alastair, who is also an emissary from that older world, feels instinctively drawn to them.

One of the paradoxes of the book is that chivalry is never found where it is expected to be and discovered in most unlikely places. A case in point here is the first meeting of Alastair and Johnson at Lord Cornbury's mansion. The lord

has just refused to stir for the Cause without additional proof of possible success when in stumbles Johnson with the naïve plea to Lord Cornbury as the only leading gentleman in the shire and “an upright and public-spirited nobleman” (M 52) to prevent a runaway match between his pupil and Lord Norreys whom he knows to be a scoundrel. The gentlemen present remain impervious to his exhortations to save the girl. He cuts a pathetic and shabby figure, a world removed from the well-fed ease of the assembled company. Lacking physical beauty or even distinction, his face and figure marred with disease and want, his manners gauche and stumbling, he elicits from “the best-bred gentlemen” (M 48) amused condescension at best, until Alastair suddenly realizes the fundamental similarity between his own mission and that of the tutor’s. In their different ways they had both been trying to force their host into acting against his pragmatic considerations “on behalf of an honourable errand” (M 55) and failed. With recognition comes respect and he can perceive in the man, whom he had earlier put down as an oddity and a boor, “a kind of rude dignity” (ibid.). When the tutor rides off into the night to pursue his mission alone, he feels compelled to quash the general merriment at the man’s expense by remarking tersely:

The man may be uncouth, but he has a stout heart and a very noble spirit. I take off my hat to his fidelity. (M 56)

Notably, he is the only one of the company to wish him good luck. When the tutor asks him to accompany him on his mission to rescue the girl, he pleads, by way of refusal, his duties as a soldier which do not permit of delay.

At this stage he has not yet met the girl in question and succumbed to her charms, so he can single-mindedly pursue his intelligence work. When the fatal meeting occurs, he faces the classic choice between love and duty. For a while he can delude himself that the two overlap but the moment he chooses to get involved in Lady Norreys’ affairs he has already forfeited his chance of ensuring the success of his Prince. Buchan is hard on his hero, making the whole outcome of Bonnie Prince Charlie’s invasion of England hinge on the moral dilemmas of Alastair alone. Fate places into his hands vital information about the imminent uprising in England in support of the Prince, a possible victory on the English soil which is the sole precondition of involvement for pragmatic aristocrats like Lord Cornbury. His duty would be to take this information to the prince in Scotland as quickly as possible and to be on his side when he invades England, for he is the only man on the Prince’s council who knows anything of war. Instead, he gets entangled in the English garden and the ties of love pull him further and further away from his Cause, to be only allowed to witness its utter ruin.

Lady Norreys, the object of his passion, is virginal and pure. She can be viewed as another manifestation of the lure of England as a garden of ease as opposed to Scotland the wilderness but her allure is more complex and deadly

than the artificial Elysian Fields that briefly distracted Alastair at Lord Cornbury's mansion. Her person is the locus of a number of conflicting meanings none of which are clearly delineated, except the Victorian insistence on the necessarily child-like nature of a good woman, but they are present nevertheless. She is the venerated object of passion in the courtly love tradition, firmly removed from the corruption of her surroundings, a truly enclosed garden of virtue in the Marian sense. She is also England in her native state, the wild unmethodized garden of 'Old England' outside the park walls where Midwinter feels at home. This is made emphatically clear by giving her and Midwinter the same song to sing about "Diana and her darling crew". She is the pagan goddess of the song, a force of nature whom Midwinter also calls Proserpina, and, more ominously, the Queen of Elfhame. Diana was notoriously unkind to men who pursued her dazzled by her virginal allure, while the elves have traditionally been masters of laying on the hero the spell of forgetfulness. Lady Norreys, like the Diana of song, leads a dance of unwitting seduction which ostensibly seems to promise happiness but might as well be a way to ruin, her reward as ephemeral as fairy gold. In her aspect of incurring Alastair's fall she is also prelapsarian Eden where evil is already at work.

Alastair first meets her face to face when, having been betrayed into the hands of the authorities by a fellow Jacobite, he is taken to the local Justice of the Peace, Squire Thickness, who is too drunk to pass verdict and leaves him to be disposed of by his house guest Lady Norreys who also happens to be a fervent Jacobite. She organises his escape but by cruel irony entrusts the enterprise to a gypsy who leads Alastair in circles until he becomes the literal object of a hunt, almost run down by the squire and his hounds. Having briefly become Acteon to his Diana, Alastair escapes by taking refuge, at Midwinter's instigation, in 'Old England'. It promises anonymity and safety but 'Old England', while kind to its inhabitants, is not necessarily so to strangers. Midwinter promises him safety from "common perils" (M 122) in what Alastair recognises to be a Fairyland, nature perceived at close quarters with the innocence of a child. But for a grown man access to this kind of innocence must be earned and Fairyland exacts a price:

It makes a man look into his heart, and he may find that in it which destroys him.
Also it is ambition's mortal foe. (Ibid.)

As it turns out, the perils in 'Old England' are common enough. Alastair, lured by the illusion of promised safety into another trap, succumbs to the charms of the Fairy Queen. He meets Lady Norreys again and she casts a spell on him by making him open his soul to her. The price of this moment of bliss is total oblivion and symbolic emasculation. Watching her house to catch her husband at his treacherous activities to the Cause, he is caught by the same evil gypsy and imprisoned in a hut for the better part of midwinter, thus missing his Prince's entire campaign in England. He is quite literally unconscious most of

the time and in shackles to underline his complete powerlessness at the hands of Lady Norreys' husband, his cruellest punishment the knowledge that his adored lady in her blind innocence thinks him a traitor, not her rascally husband. He is saved from complete annihilation at the bottom of the whirlpool by Midwinter's men, which balances the somewhat grim impression that the forces of evil can prevail unrestricted in the fabled 'Old England'.

He has yet time to catch up with his Prince at Manchester before the decisive march on London and with his good news of support in the West he could prevail on the discouraged Prince not to lose heart and strike a decisive blow for the throne. However, after meting out justice to the chief villain to whom Lord Norreys was only a mediating tool, his clear judgement is again clouded by his obsession with Lady Norreys. He is keen for a one-to-one encounter with the man who has escaped his rage by having pathetically run away. With murder on his mind he plans to bring the man to justice but is yet again dissuaded from following his natural inclination by the pleas of the impossibly idealistic Johnson to spare the feelings of Lady Norreys. At this stage the lady in question acquires all the attributes of the angel in the house of Victorian chivalry and against such unshaken chastity and devotion Alastair acknowledges himself beaten. The fragile, unearthly creature he now meets for the last time can only inspire the kind of devotion the medieval knights reserved for the Queen of Heaven. The Marian overtones, even if in the guise of Victorian chivalry, are unmistakable:

It was the child in her that overwhelmed him, the appealing child, trusting utterly with no thought but that all the world was well-disposed to her and her love. He had known many women in his time, though none had touched his cold fancy, but he had never seen woman's face transfigured with so innocent an exaltation. The sadness in it was only anxiety of a soul that trembled for the perpetuation of an unbelievable joy. He was nothing to her, nor was any man except the one; the virgin garden of her heart was enclosed with impenetrable defences.

The truth moved him not to irritation, but to pity and a protecting care. He could not mar a thing so rare, and if its foundations were rotten he would be in league to strengthen them. For a moment he was not the lover, but the guardian, who would perjure his soul to keep alive a childish paradise. (M 218)

The rotten foundations he speaks of are the moral qualities of Lord Norreys he has been urged by Johnson to reform. So, instead of taking his place by his Prince's side, he rides on an errand of love after the fleeing Norreys to talk sense into him and transform him into a model husband so that Lady Norreys would never know the extent of his moral corruption, for he has accepted Johnson's highly idealistic view that such a knowledge would be her death. This "ordeal of honour" (M 220) has its moments of cruel irony. The man he sacrifices his own chance of glory for, and that of his Prince, is completely worthless. He is fully aware that his errand is pure quixotry, that he is wilfully forsaking his only chance of happiness "to cast a pearl before swine" (M 221),

that by creating a happy home for another he himself would be forever homeless. England is already shutting him out, even before his Prince's defeat at Derby which he is shortly to witness. He has a duel of sorts with Norreys but the man is so inept and pathetic that it turns out a farce and Alastair ends it resolutely before it turns into murder on his part. He then forms "a court of honour" of himself, Midwinter and Johnson and they proceed to save the soul of the "crude and weak" (M 231) individual by appealing to his love for his wife.

Alastair has behaved like a good Christian toward his unworthy opponent and accomplished what amounts to a most Victorian act of the renunciation of the self which interestingly, in the context of the book, links the past and the future. General Oggleshorpe, another manifestation of the spirit of 'Old England' whose function it is at the crucial points of the story to counter Alastair's arguments for invasion by his arguments against it, speaks of a new temper in the land introduced by the Methodists. The evangelical revival of the next century is only a short step away, as Buchan and the reader fully know, and in this future context Alastair, a figure from the old chivalrous world, has made the choice worthy of the England which is coming into being by elevating the saving of a single soul over martial glory.

The correctness of this choice is underlined by the Prince's defeat at Derby, though for Alastair it is a personal tragedy. He has renounced his self for England but England does not reciprocate in the like manner. Instead, it cruelly rubs in his defeat by showing him, as if in a mirror, how he as a Scotsman is perceived. The valiant endeavour in which he thought he was taking part is revealed in all of its sordid ugliness when Alastair finally catches up with his Prince's army in retreat after the débâcle at Derby. In a village which has barricaded itself against the passing Highland marauders he at last encounters fellow countrymen:

From his place in the alley Alastair saw figures come into sight, a string of outlandish figures that without pause or word poured down the street. There were perhaps a score of them – barefoot Highlanders, their ragged kilts buckled high on their bodies, their legs blue with cold, their shirts unspeakably foul and tattered, their long hair matted into elf-locks. Each man carried plunder, one a kitchen clock slung on his back by a rope, another a brace of squalling hens, another some goodman's wraps. Their furtive eyes raked the houses, but they did not pause in the long loping trot with which of a moonlight night they had often slunk through the Lochaber passes. They wore the Macdonald tartan, and the familiar sight seemed to strip from Alastair's eyes the last film of illusion.

So that was the end of the long song. Gone the velvet and steel of a great crusade, the honourable hopes, the chivalry and the high adventure, and what was left was this furtive banditti slinking through the mud like the riff-raff of a fair. (M 241)

His adventure in 'Old England' has indeed exacted a heavy price. Like a knight questing in a fairyland he has sought love but found utter ruin. Already the memory of Lady Norreys is receding, obliterated by the thousand voices singing the scornful "Lilibulero" which had hounded the Prince's grandfather out of England in 1688. What is left is total defeat and disillusion and there is no one to blame except his own folly:

For it was clear that on him and on him alone had the Cause shipwrecked. At some hour yesterday the fainthearts in the Council had won, and the tragic decision had been taken, the Prince protesting – he could see the bleached despair in his face and hear the hopeless pleading in his voice. He imagined Lochiel and others of the stalwarts pleading for a day's delay, delay which might bring the lost messenger, himself, with the proofs that would convince the doubters. All was over now, for a rebellion on the defensive was a rebellion lost. /.../ But it had been his own doing – his and none other's. Providence had provided an eleventh-hour chance, which he had refused. Had he ridden straight from Brightwell, he could have been with the Prince in the small hours of the morning, time enough to rescind the crazy decision and set the army on the road to Loughborough and St. James's. But he had put his duty behind him for a whim. Not a whim of pleasure – for he had sacrificed his dearest hopes – but of another and a lesser duty. A perverse duty, it seemed to him now, the service of a woman, rather than of his King. (M 242–243)

As Midwinter had predicted, dalliance in 'Old England' has indeed been "ambition's mortal foe". Meddling in her affairs, even with the best of intentions, is punished with oblivion for all concerned:

He saw the Prince's young face thin and haggard and drawn, looking with hopeless eyes into the northern mists, a Pretender now for evermore, when he might have been a King. He saw his comrades, condemned to lost battles with death or exile at the end of them. He saw his clan, which might have become great again, reduced to famished vagrants, like the rabble of Macdonalds seen an hour ago scurrying at the tail of the army. That knot of caterans was the true comment on the tragedy. Plunderers of old wives' plenishing when they should have been a King's bodyguard in the proud courts of palaces. (M 243)

What remains for a soldier who has sacrificed all and is bereft of pride, ambition or even hope is to yield to Providence. There can be a certain glory in meeting one's fate with courage and determination. This idea is powerfully reinforced by the parable of a journey to Ramoth-Gilead from the Second Chronicles. King Ahab of Israel, who was fated to be defeated at Ramoth-Gilead, went to the battle nevertheless and was killed. Alastair rejoins his Prince's army as it is entering Scotland to be with him in the last hour of defeat. He does so to the wild music of the pipes, the seductive song of Diana quite forgotten.

Peter Pentecost (*A Blanket of the Dark*)

The concerns of *Midwinter* are even more starkly addressed in *A Blanket of the Dark* the central concern of which is the utter futility of human ambition. It is likewise set in 'Old England' and the protagonist enters what to him is a foreign world but this time he himself is the denizen of 'Old England' and his view is that of a privileged insider. We might even say that he *stands* for 'Old England' and is briefly taken out of it to reinforce his identification with it. Much more emphatically than in the earlier book this is the England of the spirit where the seductive song of Diana is firmly exposed as false and the landscape is presided over by the Queen of Heaven.

This is an ambitious book, despite its ostensible refutation of ambition. It is a romance about the death of romance and yet it is akin to the most spiritual of romances, the Grail ones. The parallel is never explicitly drawn but Peter Pentecost's spiritual journey of self-discovery has overtones of the early career of Percival/Parzival and the later one of Galahad whose spiritual chastity was rewarded with the beatific vision like Peter's is in the book. This is not to argue that these parallels are deliberate or even conscious but as R. Barber has shown (in his comprehensive overview of the evolution of Grail romances *The Holy Grail. The History of a Legend*), the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultural climate was so infused with the different re-workings of the Grail legends that the pertinent stories were kept constantly in the public eye. Whether these echoes were premeditated or otherwise, what is certain is that Buchan signals his intention of offering us a story of a highly serious spiritual quest by giving the protagonist the name Peter Pentecost. Peter's Gate to Paradise, the conditions of entry and the proper way of making of one's soul are the central concerns of the book, as is the presence of the divine in men's lives, Pentecost being the church festival which commemorated the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. For examining these issues Buchan has chosen as the backdrop to his book one of the most highly charged moments of English religious history during Henry VIII's reformation of the church between the submission of the clergy and the dissolution of the monasteries when the old catholic ways were in the process of being swept away and the new protestant learning had yet to gain the ascendancy. A new world is coming painfully into being and a choice has to be made between tradition and innovation. Peter's position here is highly interesting and by no means unequivocal.

Peter, though a scholar, is a child of the woods. He is noble-born but unaware of his ancestry, having been raised in a cottage in the forest by his stepmother. He is the fictional younger son of the executed Duke of Buckingham, Henry VIII's rival, and has been hidden in the depth of the woods by the servants of the family to conceal his identity. He is the last of the once mighty Bohuns and has royal blood in him, being the sixth man from Edward the Third and thus a true contestant for the throne of England. This is the prize

with which he is tempted out of anonymity. However, the ironies of his position are present from the start, for he is already king of all he surveys, only he does not realize it and has to make a bid for the crown to recognize the ephemerality of temporal power. The England over which he presides, which he actually *is*, is the elder England indifferent to kings and pretenders, governed by the endless cycle of the seasons. *Natura Maligna* and *Natura Benigna* which rule men's destiny are rendered in the book through the complex symbolism of the Painted Floor, a Roman mosaic depicting the four seasons and presided over by Nature herself. She can manifest herself in a number of ways and is the beginning and end of all journeys. Above all, she is a tender mother whose lap of a sanctuary Peter leaves to test his manly prowess in the world of men, to return, chastened, to her green embrace.

When the book opens, it is high summer time and Peter in his youthful, untested innocence is at one with the sunlit landscape around him. His total anonymity in the eyes of the world serves to give him a bigger identity than a mere clerk at Oxford. He is obviously made to stand for all the nameless generations who have peopled the land from time immemorial. This is made explicit by the way he is linked to the Painted Floor and what it stands for him. He is a classical scholar, Roman poets having "ravished his soul" (BD 9). In his studies he inclines to the New Learning and the Roman heritage of his country fires his imagination. The way he is made to discover the mosaic links the medieval past with the classical, joining pagan and Christian centuries into one seamless pageant so that they blend and blur and form one – vernacular – tradition. Of no small importance here is the implication of such a merger for the Church whom Peter represents. The English *via media* taking shape as the book unfolds incorporates both the catholic tradition and the classically-inspired protestant revision of it. It is precisely this kind of 'sanctuary' Peter claims as his own at the beginning of the book and which is expounded by the King as his reformation policy at the end. The King, the Church and the people are one in their desire because it is the very imperative of the land they share. All these concerns are already in place and carefully interwoven in the description of how Peter first came upon his country's classical heritage:

The place was forest land, he knew, and therefore belonged to the King /.../ But it was his own by the oldest and strongest tenure, effective occupation. /.../ The place was his very own, for he had unearthed it after it had been lost for centuries. In a charter in Oseney [the monastery where he had received his education] he had read how the King of Wessex had given to the Bishop of Winchester a piece of land by Cherwell side, which ran from a certain brook "along the green valley by the two little hills and past the Painted Floor, till it reached a certain thorn patch and a certain spring. The words had fired his fancy. Once the Romans had strode over these hills, the ruins of their massive causewayed highroads ran through marsh and forest, they had set their houses with vines and reaped their harvests where now only wild beasts rustled. To one like Peter, most of whose waking thoughts dwelt on Greece and Italy, the notion

of such predecessors among his familiar fields seemed to link his wildest dreams to the solid world of fact. That Painted Floor must be found, for it could only be a fragment of Roman work; there was such a floor in the midget church of Widford on Windrush, a mile or two from the home of his childhood. He knew the green valley and the little hills of the charter; they lay east from Wood Eaton, between the demesne of that manor and the ridge of Stowood. The Romans had been there beyond doubt, for not long since a ditcher in that very place had turned up a pot of gold coins with Emperors' heads on them – some were now at Oseney among the Abbey's treasures. (BD 8–9)

Anglo-Saxons and Romans, Christian churches with pagan floors, medieval manors and antique villas, civilisation and wilderness mingle to create one national past, presided over by benevolent Nature who has spread over it a blanket of green turf and wild flowers. The blanket of the dark spreading over the land in the book has a number of meanings, one of them being oblivion. Buchan loves parallels and we are immediately alerted to one such in the making. As in the wider context of the book the Church needs to recover the classical heritage to banish the darkness of sterile scholasticism and restore the testaments to their original meaning to bring about a new dawn, signalled by the apostles of New Learning preaching in the land, so we find Peter the humanist scholar and a pensioner of a decaying monastery one bright April morning clawing up the flower-sprinkled turf on the Roman mosaic and washing off “the dirt of centuries” (BD 9) to bring to new life a piece of his country's forgotten classical past. But as New Learning sat uneasily with old religion, so Peter's meddling with the pagan past upsets his equilibrium and like the Church he has to fight with himself to accommodate both. He embarks on a quest of meaning of what is true Christian life when a new secularity in society is consigning to oblivion the very fabric of the God-given state.

The struggle played out against the backdrop of reformation England is for us an already familiar one. It is the battle of Sense with Soul and its chief concern is the refutation of the spirit of worldliness in all its beguiling forms. Of late Peter has been suffering of a “malady of the mind” (BD 17), a restlessness induced by the temptations of the secular world which he is no longer able to suppress. The role of the humblest of the humble, a poor clerk of an impoverished abbey, relegated even here to the lowest ranks to be “disconsidered even by the disconsidered” (BD 22), is becoming unbearable now that he has come of age. The springtime of life has its own imperatives:

He wanted life and power and pride; not in a sinful cause, but for noble purposes – this he told himself hastily to still a doubting conscience. He wanted to tear the heart out of learning, which was to him the mother of power. He wanted to look the world in the face, to cast a spell over men and make them follow him. In all innocence he hungered for pomp and colour, trumpet notes, quick music, the stir of the heart. And he was only a poor scholar of St George's College in the Castle, entitled to little more than lodging and a commons of bread and ale; a pensioner of Oseney under an ancient corrody of the keepers of Wychwood

Forest; a teacher of noisy infants and dull hobbledehoyes; a fumbler at the doors of knowledge when he should be striding its halls; a clerk in a shabby gown, whom no woman cast a second glance at and proud men thrust from the causeway; a cipher, a nobody, neither lay nor cleric, gentle nor simple, man nor maid. (BD 18)

As befits a true romance, the characters that people *The Blanket of the Dark* are aspects of the protagonist and they throw into high relief choices made or unmade by the hero. This, obviously, applies to male characters, while the predominant female one has a more elemental role. She is the catalyst that unleashes the hero's dormant passions and incoherent urges and by focusing them, defines them for the protagonist and the reader.

Peter's position when defining his mature masculinity is exacerbated by the disintegration of the value system which earlier would have furnished him with comfortable career opportunities within the Church and in the service of the great men. The increasing employment, by the Crown and nobles, of educated laymen in positions once held exclusively by the clerics has collapsed the whole *raison d'être* of remaining within the Church. This aspect of decline and disintegration is rendered in the book through the crumbling magnificence of Oseney Abbey and the truncated career of Cardinal Wolsey.

The Henrican dissolution of the monasteries, here imminent, was part of his Erasmian reform which cast the monasteries as places of superstition and Christian malpractice and the commissions that travelled the land inspecting them were intent to expose their deviations from the founders' purpose or statutes. One of the concerns which sparked Wolsey's, and the King's, reforming zeal was the scandalous decline of and indifference to learning in many religious houses. Coupled with lax discipline, loose morals and the general erosion of the belief in the necessity of prayers for the souls in purgatory which had been the mainstay of these institutions, the reluctance to move with the times and update their religious practice according to the humanist reappraisal of religion, steered the Crown and its adviser to an ever more radical course of reform which culminated with their wholesale dissolution. (For further details see G. W. Bernard's magisterial *The King's Reformation. Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church.*) Oseney in *The Blanket of the Dark*, with a bustling township at its gate, is still a self-sustained community, a miniature model of the medieval society where all the three classes of those who fight, those who pray and those who work can interact in harmony. Its cloisters had been Peter's home but of late its very shelteredness has been grating on Peter's nerves. He had been sent to Oxford to further his studies in preparation for entering a religious life but instead of reinforcing his convictions, the university has undermined them:

He had found the place humming with a strange jargon and fevered with the beginning of a new life. There was Greek to be had in the new lectures at Corpus Christi College, and Greek was not a fresh subject to be added to the Trivium

and Quadrivium, but a kind of magic which altered all the rest of man's knowledge. It made him contemptuous of much that his betters still held venerable, and critical even of the ways of God. But there was more astir in Oxford than Greek. The sons of great men were coming now to college, instead of going like their fathers to a nobleman's household or the King's Court, and they were bringing the wind of politics into its sheltered groves. (BD 19)

With some irony he is to make the reverse journey, from clerk into a nobleman, but the result of this intrusion of worldliness into what was a simple harmony between his faith and the world around him, has been a dual vision. Oseney Abbey, once a "mystic city filled with all the wisdom of God and man" (BD 20), has lost its spiritual authority:

Sometimes he thought the sight the noblest on earth, not to be bettered surely by Rome or Jerusalem. But now he saw it only as a jumble of grey stone, and under that jumble he knew that there were weedy courtyards, and seventeen ageing canons stumbling aimlessly through their days of prayer, and an Abbot on whose brow sat the cares of the world rather than the peace of God, and shrill-voiced impudent novices, and pedlars who made the cloisters like St Giles's Fair – a shell once full of fruit, but empty now but for weevils and a few dry and rotting shreds. A medley of singing rivulets filled the place, freshening the orchards and meadows, sending strong leats to wash away filth, edging the walks, turning mill-wheels, making everywhere pools and founts and cisterns. In a happier hour he had told himself that Oseney was a northern Venice, a queen of waters; now in his distemper it seemed only a mouldering relic among sewers. (BD 17–18)

Peter is translating, with a fellow of Corpus Christi, the pioneering institution in Greek studies, a book of Plato into Ciceronian Latin. However, being merely engaged in fashionable humanist study fails to provide the satisfaction it ostensibly should. Advancement through learning offers poor prospects, with the unfinished shell of Cardinal College that would have been a beacon of New Learning had Wolsey been allowed to finish his project a constant reminder that even the most brilliant career in the Church could be cut short by the caprices of secular power. Peter's point of departure for his quest is his recognition of his utter, hopeless humility in worldly terms even if "a flux in Church and State" (BD 19) might promise opportunities for advancement to others less cramped by circumstances:

It was a moment when barriers seemed to be cracking, and there were wild chances for youth. But in such chances Peter had no share. The most that lay before him was the narrow life of the religious, regular monk or secular priest, or a life nor less narrow spent in the outer courts of learning as a copier of scripts and a schoolmaster to youth. He was a peasant and a son of peasants, and there was no place for him in the glittering world. Once the Church might have helped him to a pinnacle, as it had helped the great Cardinal of York, now dead. But the Church was crumbling; soon it would be no more than an appanage to the King's palace, and its affairs would be guided by high-handed oppressive folk such as he had watched last night jingling through Stowood. (BD 20)

Disillusion with the ruinous state of the Church, however, has in no way diminished Peter's faith. Before he is plucked from obscurity for a brief moment in the limelight, his position vis-à-vis religion is made clear and any later developments should be viewed in the light of the following self-consolatory statement:

Sinner that he was, he had the Faith to hold him up, the Faith for whose mysteries he had once hungered and trembled. The world might go withershins, but here was a cornerstone which could not be removed, an anvil which had worn out many hammers. To remember that he was a clerk gave him a second of pride, almost defiance, for the Church and her clerks had many foes. He was not obscure so long as he was a member of that celestial brotherhood, nor humble when he had a title to the pride of Heaven. (Ibid.)

His career as a scholar comes to an end when it is decided by Henry VIII's opponents to bring him out of hiding to be a figurehead to their rebellion. This will try him with all the worldly temptations but before we consider his career as the Duke of Buckingham's new-found son, it is instructive to look at three other scholarly men in the book whose twofold function is to adumbrate Peter's alternative choices to the one he makes at the end and provide commentary on the King's reformation. In their various ways they highlight the aspects of the reform which by implication are inimical to the emerging *via media*.

Brother Tobias, Peter's teacher and mentor, stands for the Old Church. He represents a scholar of the old school who acknowledges the presence of certain abuses which must be cleared away in the light of new knowledge but the Church's function and structure should remain as they were. The King's heretical break with Rome would lead to the weakening and ultimate breaking up of the unity of Christendom and the elevation of secular power over the spiritual. The Church stands for eternal right and eternal justice and should it fall, "selfish ambition and man-made laws would usurp the place of these verities" (BD 45):

God and Mammon, Christ and Caesar – they could not share an equal rule; one must be on top, and if it were Mammon or Caesar then the soul's salvation was ranked lower than the interests of a decaying and transitory world. (Ibid.)

He exults, when Peter is to lead a rebellion akin to the Pilgrimage of Grace of 1536, an uprising in the north sparked off by the planned dissolution of the monasteries, that Providence has chosen Peter as the "champion by whose prowess the Church must stand or fall" (ibid.). That rebellion, the fictional continuation of which the uprising in the book would be, was a spontaneous response of the population to what was seen as the unjustified tampering with centuries-old religious practice on the part of the government in the interests of self-aggrandizement. Peter's position here is interesting. His ultimate choice would be Tobias's enunciated above – soul's salvation ranked above power and wealth – but he would not fight to preserve the old structure of the Church. His

struggle, though he consents to lead the old-timers' rebellion, is purely individual. In this, his position is, predictably, akin to the King's – Catholicism purged of its excesses – and an inevitable one, in the light of England's ultimate religious settlement, if Peter is to stand for the commonality of England. He makes his peace with God on his own, like a protestant, but his position as a representative of the future generations of Anglicans cannot be that of a Lutheran. Here, too, his position is necessarily that of the King, as Providence is made clearly to show by sending the floods which conveniently foil his rebellion once Peter has recognized the essential similarity of their positions. England would reject the hind-bound old but also the radically new, as testified by the fates of two Luteranos, one a scholar like Peter before his social elevation and the other Peter's social equal, a nobleman of what would be seen in England as extreme protestant views.

The Ten Articles of 1536 which defined the Henrican reformation, as Q. W. Bernard (2005: 282) has emphasized, were an attempt by which the King sought "to set out a middle way in religion between Rome and Wittenberg, Rome and Zurich". Henry would not accept the central Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone nor the Zwinglian stance on the real presence and the result was what was seen by the King as a tempered doctrine purged of old abuses and false religion alike. Henry's central concern was the defence of the King's supremacy and his break with Rome and there is much ambiguity in the Articles concerning the then controversial subjects of purgatory, the mass and the sacraments generally. But the way they were treated was emphatically not Lutheran, the King having published his own refutation of Luther's works as early as 1521. The preventive bonfires of heretical books in the 1520s nevertheless could not prevent the penetration of continental ideas into England and though the number of the English followers of Luther or Zwingli remained small, their number was steadily growing. They could be found mostly among the scholars and students of the two universities and people whose business took them frequently to the continent.

Nathaniel Sturmy, a Cambridge clerk whose path crosses Peter's at crucial moments when something momentous is going to happen to Peter which would directly concern the making of his soul, is a wandering gospeller of fiercely held Lutheran views. He is persecuted as a heretic who travels with gypsies the roads of 'Old England', spreading the unadulterated word of God in the vernacular. This is a direct contravention of Henry's position who allowed, after a long struggle against the Lutheran precept that the testaments should be made available to all believers in their vernacular, the translation of the Scriptures into English with the proviso that the right to interpret them would remain with the Church alone. The number of men like the fictional Sturmy in the 1530s was small, as Bernard has shown (2005: 279). The fate of men like Thomas Bilney, a Cambridge fellow, who espoused the doctrine of justification by faith alone and embarked on a preaching tour in 1527 and 1531, preaching and distributing

Tyndale's freshly translated New Testament, to be arrested, tried and burnt in Norwich as a heretic or John Frith, a Cambridge scholar who had been recruited by Wolsey to his Cardinal College, a translator of works by Luther who also betrayed influences of Zwingli and who was forced into exile on the suspicion of heresy and assisted Tyndale in his translation of the Old Testament in Antwerp. On his return to England he, too, was captured, tried and burnt for heresy. Men like these may have been at the back of Buchan's mind when he created the elusive Sturmy who travels the byways of 'Old England', having completely merged with the landscape. He is obviously of noble birth and breeding but has given up everything to bring God's word to the people. This is Peter's fate too. From their first meeting in the forest when Sturmy shows the translated Bible to Peter but does not allow him to read it with the words "England is not yet ripe for it, but the hour draws near" (D 7), Peter is set on the course of the renunciation of worldly vanity which culminates with his final disappearance into the undergrowth with the Queen of Heaven's charge

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways. (BD 258)

Simon Rede of Boarstall is the kind of man Peter might have been had he been allowed to retain his rank. His kind of presence is Peter's envy and desire and, significantly, he is Peter's rival in love. Simon embodies all the opportunities and choices of a man of rank who is enamoured of New Learning but has gone further than the King in becoming a true Luterano. He is a soldier and a landowner, a man fully in possession of himself, with the kind of secure identity which Peter achieves only very briefly before he is plucked from the pinnacle of life to be plunged underground.

Here was one who rode the broad ways of the world and feared nothing; a masterful man who would have his way with life; one who had seen with his own eyes that wonderful earth of which Peter had only read; a fierce soul who would be a deadly enemy, but who might also be a delectable comrade, for there was ease and jollity in his air. (BD 4-5)

He has travelled on the King's business to the northern courts (i.e. the Protestant ones) where he may have picked up his radical ideas, but he has also sailed in the service of the King of Spain to the New World and in the light of the later spread of the brand of English Protestantism overseas, he is given the role of the prophet of expansion, also significant because some of Peter's descendants will make their lives in America, thus reinforcing the connection between Simon's early travels and the later settlers. However, the future settlers of America would be the ones dissatisfied with the lukewarm compromise between radicalism and Catholicism that is the *via media* and would seek the further cleansing of Anglicanism of the remnants of 'superstition'. Simon's glowing description of the New World as the world of light when compared with "a dark blanket which covers Europe" (BD 104), can be read in this light, as well as of

economic expansion. And yet, despite all this manly magnificence, Sabine does not choose him. If Sabine is seen as England with her female intuition and common sense choosing between rival creeds, she clearly finds Simon's too extreme. Simon is hand in glove with the new gossellers, hoping "to give a hand in raising the blanket" (ibid.) that covers England, sheltering Sturmy and organizing his escape from authorities when the latter is captured preaching in Oxfordshire. He has lost his credibility at court and his lot is to be that of a semi-exile. Sabine consigns him to the margins of society for having refused to achieve a compromise between doctrine and power:

What has Master Simon to offer but the mouldering walls of Boarstall, or more likely a wet bed in the forest, for he is ever at odds with those in power. We women, who would be wives, love peace and surety. (BD 175)

He would sail again to the New World and fight for the protestant cause in the early religious wars of France but his role in England would be marginal. He returns to England under Elizabeth (presumably because the religious settlement is finally in place and persecution has stopped) but refuses to go to Court and ends his days a solitary recluse in his crumbling tower.

Before we proceed to the complex relationship of Peter and Sabine, it will be interesting to look at the man whom Sabine finally chooses as her mate. Predictably, it is the King's man, the kind of new man the Tudors made their power base – Sir Gabriel Messynger of Wales. He is Peter's other rival in love and obviously a man of the new England coming into being. He is Peter's near contemporary but a world removed from his rustic simplicity. An urbane man with the polish and manners of the court of France, a master of condescending dissimulation and shrewd politicking, he betrays Peter's identity and rebellion to the King, in return receiving confiscated church lands and Sabine's hand in marriage. Their social rise to pre-eminence is swift and their descendants are "still perpetuated in high places" (BD 261). Yet however brilliant their rise and the historical justification of their choice, they had sold their souls for worldly vanity and the last word on Sabine's choice remains with Tobias:

What survived was but a phantom, a hollow thing with much beauty and more cunning, who was mated to another hollow thing, and shone resplendent in a hollow world. (BD 262–263)

Peter's relationship with Sabine is played out according to the canons of courtly love, both Tudor and Victorian, but her role is much more complex than a mere lady on a pedestal. She is the catalyst of Peter's quest for moral identity and we are offered the most ambitious treatment of the lover's progress in the whole Buchan oeuvre – the full sequence of sensual love in stages being sublimated into the love of the Virgin.

Her appearance on the scene marks Peter's sexual awakening. Peter's readiness to open himself to the world of sensual pleasure is signalled by his keenness to locate and unearth the Painted Floor. It is a pagan mosaic extolling

the power of Nature and the promise of sensual gratification signalled by the intricate design of grape leaves woven around the goddess in the centre, whom Peter identifies at this stage as Ceres or Proserpina. It is a voluptuous, rustic mosaic, offering to the viewer the bounty of nature – Pan’s pipes, summer’s flowers, the cornucopia of autumn and the joys of the winter hunt. To Peter it’s beauty is a revelation and, like so many progresses that are circular in the book, this first revelation, after a series of metamorphoses, will merge with the last, Peter returning to the Floor chastened to recognize in the goddess Mother Nature who is also the Queen of Heaven.

Sabine first manifests herself to Peter as an elf which signals both her elusiveness and Peter’s perplexity as to how to interpret her different moods but also puts her firmly in the un-Christian context. Peter’s first perception of the Floor had been through the prism of Roman poets as a kind of English Arcadia and he is mentally ready for the appearance of a seductive nymph. That she initially appears as an elf – or rather as a shimmering vision to the call of an elfin flageolet – hints at her magic power to delude men, well known from folklore where her intent is often mischievous, if not malicious. This brief fancy, so very telling in the light of Peter’s later relationship with Sabine, is followed by a more substantial vision which identifies Sabine as Diana/Artemis, the chaste temptress with the power of destroying men. Peter’s epiphanies at the Floor are always heralded by a silver sheen. It is cast by the moon which seems to bring the enthroned goddess to life, signalling Sabine’s identification with the Moon Goddess. This is reinforced further by her abandoned, ritualistic dance on the Floor in which she blends with the moonlight to the extent that her “presence could be known only when it obscured the pattern” (BD 11). She is the forces of Nature personified which are now, for the first time, calling Peter in earnest and on this first occasion her call is chaste:

The pattern of her dance seemed to be determined by the pictures under her feet. Sometimes she tripped down the convolutions and whorls till her eyes dazzled. At the corner plaques she fitted her movements to their design – wild in Spring, languorous in Summer, in Autumn a bacchanal, in Winter a tempest. (BD 12)

To Peter’s classically trained eye she appears “a Greek nymph”, “a hierophant” (ibid.) worshipping at the altar of Ceres, an appropriate goddess come to his secret sanctuary. Her call is the call of youth, of love, of sensual pleasure, of sensual love bearing earthly fruit, an elemental force, Nature herself as she flits and spins “like a leaf of a blown petal” (ibid.) across the radiant Floor. Significantly, her robes are virginal white, bringing in the aspect of the pure mother of God. For this is also her enclosed garden but Peter, whose senses are dazed, at first does not recognize the connection. It is nevertheless emphatically present in the very prayer he resorts to, his favourite one to the Mother of God. Significantly, also, he cannot finish it, his clamouring senses blinding him to all except the sensuality of the vision. He falls into “a waking dream” (ibid.) which is an apt metaphor for what is to follow.

The ironies in Peter's progress are many. Mostly they are to do with illusions and delusions, which, as they fall by the wayside one by one, free Peter's soul from the encumbrance of worldly ties. His journey to self-knowledge is circular and the first and greatest irony is that he does not recognize, before he starts out, that he already possesses his soul's desire. He has already experienced the Golden Age about which he has read in the Roman classics and yearns for. Having been raised in the forest, he has a recollection of "an infinite series of golden hours, green woods and clear waters and gentle faces" (BD 27) which he thinks an illusion but which will turn out to be his only true reality. Instead, he bemoans his "narrow" youth as lost and dreams of winning "that clean and gracious world which the classical poets had revealed to him, another and a fairer youth, an eternal springtime of the spirit" (ibid.). He dreams of a different life and world but from the start there is his half-conscious recognition that this wish is only half-hearted, an accusation later levelled at him by Sabine. His course of self-abnegation is set even before his adventures begin and if D. Daniell professes himself unable to pin down what exactly causes Peter's successive clearances of sight in what he perceives as a confusion of different camera-angles (1975: 187), Buchan himself has given us an explicit key – Peter's temperament which has been tempered by his scholar's upbringing. He briefly toys with the idea of becoming a soldier, not an impossible dream, since he has been taught the basic use of weapons by his far-sighted guardians:

He had a momentary thought of breaking all shackles and seeking another course of life. /.../ The notion only crossed his mind to be dismissed. Learning, even a little learning, had spoiled him for beginning life in the ranks among bullies and cut-throats and fellows whose sole possession was their sinews. It had made him fastidious. He hungered, and yet could be dainty about any offered dish. (BD 27)

This "monkish" disposition will resurface time and again, even as he is doing his best to remould himself to fit the others' image of Buckingham's son and finally reassert itself with all the force of the classic *via negativa*.

Once he learns his name and ancestry, his brief flirtation with ambition quickly fades away when he realizes that what had pained him was only his lowly status as an orphan of unknown parentage:

He had got his wish. He remembered his bitter jealousy in the hot Oxford streets of a sounding world in which he had no part. He was in the way during the next few months of getting a full portion of that world. And he realized that he did not want it, that the fruit was ashes before he put his mouth to it.

Peter tried to be honest with himself. One thing he had gained that could never be taken from him. He was not born of nameless peasants, but of the proudest stock in England. He had in his veins the blood of kings. That was the thought which he hugged to his breast to cheer his despondency. But now he knew that he wanted that knowledge, and nothing more. He did not desire to live in palaces or lead armies. He wanted, with that certainty of his birth to warm his heart, to go back to his old bookish life, or to sink deep among countryfolk into

the primordial country peace. He had thought himself ambitious, but he had been wrong. His early life had spoiled him for that bustling fever which takes men to high places. He did not like the dust of the arena, and he did not value the laurels. (BD 48)

Likewise, his progress with Sabine is determined by the same reticence. He is ideally placed to worship a woman in the true courtly manner, having no experience of womankind except his elderly stepmother whose rank makes her his servant. A man destined to enter the Church, he has never even really looked a woman full in the face and they have remained for him “mysterious beings, sometimes old and witch-like, sometimes young and shining, but always to be shunned by him who would serve God and save his soul” (BD 53). In his innocence he is easy to beguile but the last precept will remain central to his perception of Sabine and effect his release from the ties of earthly love.

Being a scholar, his imagination is literary, furnished with shepherdesses from Theocritus and “the proud tales of old queens, for whom men had counted the world well lost” (ibid.) but when, ironically, he is offered a chance of staking his all on a chance of winning a queenly consort, he shies away from it. There is a duality in his perception which he has to negotiate and overcome. This, too, is indicated at the outset and to this perception he will return at the end, having found a way of reconciling the two. His dream companion is an amalgam of Helen of Troy and the Virgin Mother, a sensual temptress and a saviour of souls, marking the point of departure and end of his progress from sexual to spiritual love. This is an abstract journey, composed of ephemeral visions and for Peter will remain so, despite some very straightforward invitations:

So he had come in time to make for himself pictures of a woman who should be fair as Helen and as gentle as the Virgin Mother, pictures as vague as gossamer, for they rested on no base of human meaning. Sometimes indeed, when the sun was bright of a spring morning, his visions had taken a simple form, and he had felt strange stirrings of the blood, which he had not resisted as sin – which he had not even questioned, for they seemed as innocent as thirst or hunger. (BD 53–54)

In his naivety Peter will constantly misread the signs. After the initial renunciation, he returns to the path of ambition only because of the sexual passion aroused by Sabine. He is deluded that Providence is on his side due to the uniting circumstance of their possession of the Painted Floor. He mistakes her interest in him for a pure passion, similar to his own sanctified by the Floor, and mistakenly believes Sabine to be part of the elemental world outside the stifling confines of the aristocratic society he now enters. Yet nothing could be further from the truth, for her seduction is carefully planned and motivated by self-interest. The revelatory sequence from a fellow child of the woods to a calculating temptress is played out in the single episode when Sabine tries to lure him to her bed in what is her true natural setting – the luxurious castle of

Avelard. Peter, smothered and hemmed in by the accoutrements of his new position, at first takes her singing to be spontaneous, like that of a wild bird, only gradually realizing that it is a seductive Siren who is tempting him to partake in “new and lawless delights” (BD 89). His instinctive reaction is “sheer terror” at his own willingness to give in and he seeks protection in a prayer. However, by morning his senses have won:

[He] found himself in a new mood of pride and expectancy. He had forgotten his scruples. This fantastic world into which he had fallen was full of strange delights, and, if some were unlawful, the deeper the witchery. (Ibid.)

His perception of her as the virginal Artemis is quickly supplanted by that of voluptuous Aphrodite, as she tries to seduce him over an intimate dinner. He is clearly out of his depth. While abstractly dreaming of her in his forest hideout he had been rearing to go and conquer in her name, to make her queen of England, for “nothing less would content him, or be worthy of her magnificence” (BD 54). Now, when she openly offers herself as his prize, “something monastic and virginal” (BD 94) in him is repelled. He resists and earns the girl’s cold scorn.

The story of Peter’s disillusion with love runs parallel to his disillusion with his cause. As the cold-blooded scheming behind both becomes increasingly manifest, so does Peter’s disillusion with his new-found class. Neither the traditionally conservative squirearchy, represented in the book by Sir Ralph Bonamy in his medieval manor which might have stepped out of any Victorian canvas depicting life in ‘Merry Old England’, nor the sophisticated aristocrats like lord Avelard in their fashionable renaissance palaces are ready to fight for any greater cause than their direct self-interest. The ancients of ‘Old England’ is only going to use him as its tool to fight the Welshman who has curbed their privileges. For the commonalty of the elder England and its old Church they care as little as the King’s new men whom they seek to overthrow. The real ‘Old England’ has gone underground, as both their ancient masters and new upstarts at court are turning England into one vast sheep-walk. Broken, masterless men, their communities destroyed, are blown like leaves across the wild landscape they have become a part. The parallel with leaves is not accidental. Sabine in her dance seemed part of this world but this is an illusion which takes Peter further and further away from the reality of true England where beggars are the real masters of the land. The more closely he gets embroiled in his bid for the crown, the direr the portents become, every step down the path of ambition being marked by new revelations about the emptiness of worldly glory. These culminate in the ‘Road to Damascus’ episode when Peter is shown the most horrible end of his ancestor Lord Lovell who had been even more ambitious than Peter’s hugely ambitious grandfather Buckingham whose ruin he had been, seizing for himself the office of Constable and being thus in a position to plunder the whole kingdom. He is supposed to

have amassed a stupendous fortune which might be Peter's, should he find it. Peter is wavering in his resolution to keep pure the purpose of his "crusade" for God, his Church and the poor commons of England. The clerk's conscience in him is all but smothered by thoughts of "mundane glory and mundane joys" (BD 111) that threaten to imperil his chance of salvation:

Ambition welled fiercely within him. /.../ His imagination was full of trampling horses and bright swords and banners, the mad cheering of multitudes, thrones and palaces and soft raiment, the soft eyes of fair women. (BD 141)

He deludes himself that Lovell's fortune might furnish him with the much needed sinews of war and make him an independent agent in the rebellion, no longer held hostage by the need to bind himself with promises to plunder Church lands to pay his associates. He goes to dig for this treasure in the ruins of the once magnificent palace Minstrel Lovell but in an underground chamber discovers the most gruesome parable of all on the emptiness of worldly glory. Instead of hidden treasure, he finds Lovell himself who had disappeared in mysterious circumstances fifty years previously in one of the most powerfully evocative scenes Buchan has ever imagined. Lovell's body lies huddled and crooked at the door of what amounts to nothing grander than a bare anchorite's cell:

The man had died of hunger and thirst, had died in mortal agony, for he had gnawed his finger-tips and bitten deep into his left wrist. Wrinkled at their feet, every limb contorted, the garments disordered in the last extremity, the body was an awful parody of the image of God. Peter, deadly sick, leaned on the table. /.../ He saw the dreadful panorama of the man's death as if he had been an eyewitness. The fugitive from Stoke battle, with the avenger of blood at his heels, he had sought refuge in his own house, where Mother Blackthorn hid him beyond the reach of any pursuit. She alone knew the secret of his lair, and had the means of entrance. There Lovell waited till a way could be found of moving himself and his ill-gotten wealth overseas. But the woman had fallen sick, a mortal illness, and, since she was the sole guardian of the hermitage, the refugee deep in the earth, had no one to give him food and drink. She had grown delirious, men had had to hold her down in bed and check her frenzy, for she knew that her master below was dying by inches, presently she had passed into stupor and death. Meanwhile, he who had been a great prince and had ruled England had grown hourly weaker, impotent as a babe to save himself. He had licked up from the floor the crumbs of his last meal, he had eaten the candle-ends, he had gone mad and chewed his hands, until at the end in his ultimate mania he had beaten on the unyielding door till he dropped with death in his throat. /.../ He turned the lantern on the crumpled vellum pages on the table. He saw that it was an account book. Lovell had been passing the hours of his confinement in counting his wealth. /.../ What was the glory of the world if it closed in dry bones and withered skin? Lovell had been, next the King, the greatest man in all England, and he had died like a rat in a trap, gnawing his fingers in his agony. The starved peasant gasping out his last breath in a ditch had a better ending. (BD 146-147, 152)

Peter's subsequent refusal to seek out Lovell's buried treasure, signalled by his throwing of the account book into Lovell's grave, marks his renunciation of the pursuit of wealth but to his consternation no celestial vision of glory rewards his sacrifice. To earn it, he has to renounce sensual pleasure in favour of a broader vision which would encompass the whole land. If Peter is emphatically to stand for the commonalty of England, his sensual love for Sabine should be transformed into love that would encompass the whole of God's creation. Peter's martial and amatory progress after his disillusion with earthly ambition would mould him into a perfect knight, a soldier of Christ who has transcended the barriers of Sense to attain a vision of love that is purely spiritual. To this end Peter is allowed to achieve full prowess as a warrior, a journey very much akin to Parzifal's from a gauche peasant into an accomplished knight. His renunciation of earthly pleasure would bring to mind the saintly Galahad whose self-denial was rewarded by the beatific vision.

Galahad had no earthly ambitions and eschewed sensual love. In Victorian iconography he is shown forever questing, a lonely horseman battling the elements in pursuit of a vision of celestial glory. Peter's progress from sensual to spiritual love has a strong doze of the idealistic Galahad, not least in his crowning vision of the Queen of Heaven in a howling snowstorm. When made to choose between sensual gratification and salvation, his hesitation is only momentary. He had been driven on the road to earthly glory by what he had imagined was his passion for the seductive Sabine, "life incarnate, youth *in excelsis*, beauty sanctified" (BD 153). But when he is asked to confirm his choice by pledging an alliance to her, to risk his soul and well as body in a bid for the crown, he instinctively draws back, repelled by the lowly earthliness of Sabine's desires. Once freed from the thrall of his senses, he is in a position to recognize that he had been "hungering for something of which Sabine had been only a shadow" (BD 189). True love would bring together "Eros and Psyche, the wandering soul and the wandering heart" (*ibid.*). He is set firmly on the road to sublimating his hitherto narrowly focused sexual passion into something much more sublime:

A strange solemn joy took possession of him. He was being weaned from the lesser that he might attain the greater. The sight of Lovell's bones had shattered one kind of earthly ambition, and now in the girl he had renounced another. (BD 189)

Body and soul, Earth and Heaven for Peter come together in a supremely poetic vision of the Mother of God and this, too, has been a circular journey, an invocation to the Virgin having been his favourite one since childhood. She manifests herself to him in his last extremity when he is bereft of all his new-found accoutrements of wealth and status, reduced to the helplessness of a child:

He stood, or lay, or knelt – he was beyond consciousness of the body – and gazed upward with wondering rapture. He had heard it said that the Blessed Trinity ruled in turn, and that the reign of the Father and of the Son had passed, and that now was the reign of the Holy Spirit. But, since men must have their special worship, his had always been for the Virgin, who stood between man and the harshness of eternal justice. She was Woman, Mother and Queen alike, who loved beauty and simple things and did not greatly relish the cold cloisters of piety. She was divine, but like Prometheus she had brought fire to men. Her face was grave, for she had known infinite sorrow, and it was proud, since she carried the keys of Heaven; but it had tenderness and humour, too, for she had been human and loved humanity. She was stronger than the greatest warriors, and wiser than the wisest, the woman enthroned to whom all men must bow in the end. She was the hope of the world, for she made even mortality divine; she was the Power above the Law, who brought mercy into justice and tenderness into the sublimities of Son and Father. She was the protectress of man against fate, his one way of escape from the punishment of soul and body.

As he gaped, it seemed to him that in that face he saw every dream of his childhood and youth – the dim heights of devotion to which in Oseney Great Church he had mounted on waves of music – the glory of the fields in May – the joy of young blood – the vision of shimmering nymphs and slim goddesses out of old poets – the solemn rapture of the philosophers. Sabine, too, was in her, for she was very woman – Sabine's witchery and Mother Sweetbread's tenderness; queen she was, but peasant too – peasant and gipsy. To those immortal eyes the little conventions of mankind were folly, but even to folly they were kind. (BD 193)

She is the eternal springtime of the spirit which is walking the land though it is seemingly covered by the blanket of the dark. When his rebellion fails, she welcomes Peter back to the world of his childhood, the heaths and forests of 'Old England' which is impervious to the tyrannies of men. Great men might bet on their chance of making up with God at the gates of paradise but the assurance of life everlasting would be with those who choose to walk with her infusing with heavenly radiance the common life of man.

Turnour Wyse (*The Free Fishers*)

Buchan's third historical novel set in 'Old England', and also his last in the genre, is a light-hearted romp in Regency England, consisting basically of a series of hurried journeys, held together lightly by an intrigue which tends to be subsumed by the sheer pleasure of the chase. For our purposes, what is of interest is the comparative construction of Englishness and Scottishness through the prism of the gentlemanly ideal. Antony Lammas, the representative of Scottish character, is a middle-class man. The English national character, however, is emphatically defined in the book as aristocratic and it is interesting to look at what Buchan considers the salient features of the modern English

gentleman. Whether chosen deliberately or because of the period's aesthetic appeal, Regency as a period marks the emergence of the modern gentleman as we know him, the post-ancien regime dandy setting the style in dress and manners which has endured, with only slight modifications, to this day. Admittedly, Buchan's version of dandyism is inevitably coloured by Victorian censure which considerably toned down the original licentiousness of the dandy's world. Turnour Wyse is a intriguing mixture of the dandy flair and Victorian reticence which, curiously, in the light of recent research (see e.g. Kelly 2005), might be closer to the original spirit of Regency dandysim than the later Victorian caricature of excess and depravity.

Sir Turnour Wyse, Baronet, of Wood Rising Hall, Norfolk, Lammas's fellow protagonist in the novel, bursts onto the scene in a magnificent, custom-made chaise, "like a God from a machine, looking like some Homeric hero, larger than human in the morning fog" (FF 47), to rescue Lammas and his fellow passengers when their coach has crashed into a ditch. His fame has preceded him. While passing through Edinburgh, Lammas has been given an additional task by one of his patrons. It appears that his former pupil, the young Lord Belses, has embroiled himself in a violent quarrel with this particular gentleman over the reputation of a lady suspected of Jacobin sympathies. The young man, deeply in love, has taken upon himself the role of her champion, while Wyse appears at this stage as the most vociferous of a pack of London dandies intent on dragging the lady's name through the mud. Belses has actually challenged the insolent slanderer to a duel, an appointment he was unable to keep. Having been locked up by his parents who fear for his life, Belses has incurred his opponent's scorn for cowardice. Fear of ridicule from his peers has driven the baronet to seek revenge and he has been searching high and low for Belses in order to settle the matter with him. Lammas has been asked to reason with the boy and make him see sense in settling the dispute without violence. The danger to his life is great indeed for the "mad baronet" is a crack pistol-shot who has already shot three duellists. Wyse is also known to be truculent and opinionated, so, the negotiations failing, Lammas is under orders to take Belses somewhere safe until the baronet's fury has abated.

With this awesome task before him, Lammas sets out for London. To while away the time, he strikes up a conversation with the coachman and learns that the adversary of his pupil is the most famous whip in England, thus adding another facet to Wyse's emerging character as a sportsman. To Lammas's question as to how the amateur gentlemen drivers, who own their own coaches or drive a stage coach as a hobby, compare to the regulars, Mr Tolley, the driver of the Royal Mail, the highest-ranking professional in his field with thirty-seven years of experience behind him, has the following to say:

The college boys that drives the Oxford and Cambridge stages are of no particular account, though some of 'em learns the job in time. And there's heaps o' gentlemen as can make a pretty show with four nicely matched tits past Hyde

Park Corner that I wouldn't trust for serious work. /.../ [T]here's three-four-yes, five gentlemen I allows to be my equal, and the equal of any professional coachman that ever drew on gloves. /.../ but there's one gentleman to whom I gives the best every time. Whatever stakes he enters for George Tolley withdraws, for he knows his master. And that gent is Sir Turnour Wyse, Baronet, of Wood Rising 'All, in the county of Norfolk. Well I know the name, for he sends my missus a brace of pheasants every Christmas. (FF 39–40)

With this comment the coachman establishes Wyse's credentials as the greatest sportsman of his day and a true gentleman, as testified by his largesse of sending the pheasants to a social minor in the spirit of fellow sportsmanship. The point is further reinforced by Lammas's fellow traveller's comment about Wyse after the coach accident: "A young Corinthian /.../ for he seemed to know more about horseflesh than is becoming in a man who does not make his living by it" (ibid.). The not entirely complimentary nature of the last comment highlights the controversial nature of the "Corinthian" ideal espoused by Regency dandies like Wyse. "Corinthian" as a synonym for a licentious libertine owes its origin to the loose-living citizens of Corinth in ancient Greece. In early nineteenth century the term came to be applied to a certain type of sport-loving dandy and man about town. T. Veblen (1953: 45) has argued that the Regency man of pleasure strove to fill his hours of leisure with non-productive yet conspicuous activities. This underlined his freedom from exploitation and thus lifted him above the vulgar masses engaged in productive work. Yet leisure for him did not mean indolence or inactivity. To account for his time genteelly, he had to fill it with time-consuming and ostentatious activities. Hours spent in front of the mirror, choosing food and wine, playing sports and games were forms of conspicuous consumption of leisure. In the golden age of the stage coach, before the railways put it out of business, dandies, bored by the endless social round, developed a passion for the open road and great speed. Driving carriages and coaches with professional expertise became a desired goal. To put Wyse's over-riding passion for driving all sorts of carriages into the proper period context, we should have a closer look at the kind of gentleman sportsman admired at the time.

Pierce Egan, in his *Real Life in London*, has in the character Mr Spankalong given us a composite portrait of a Regency dandy completely dedicated to his favourite sport of driving mail coaches. Bored with the inanities of society, he takes pleasure in the company of grooms and stable hands and even dresses like one:

This gentleman has a most unconquerable attachment to grooms, coachmen and stable assistants; whose language and manners is one of the principal studies of his life to imitate /.../ He will take a journey of a hundred miles out of town, merely to meet and drive up a mail coach, paying for his own passage, and feeling the coachman for permission. /.../ And it is a fact, that he had one of his

teeth punched out, in order to enable the noble aspirant to give the true coachman's whistle. (Egan 1905: 343)

In his *Sketches and Travels in London*, Thackery, writing about the fashions of the year 1810 makes a similar point about dressing down, also enlisting other favourite pastimes of men of fashion:

It was the custom in those days with many gentlemen to dress as much like coachmen as possible: in top-boots, huge white coats with capes, Belcher neckerchiefs and the like adornments; and at the tables of bachelors of the very first fashion, you would meet with prize-fighters and jockeys and hear a great deal about the prize-ring, the cock-pit and the odds. (Quoted in Mason 1982: 82)

The beginnings of the cult of competitive sport, accompanied by betting, and the widespread admiration for the sporting hero, have been traced back to the time of the Napoleonic wars. Wyse's fictional exploits in *The Free Fishers*, touched upon later, bring to mind some real life 19th-century sporting characters whose extraordinary careers must have been known to Buchan when he set about creating his quintessential Englishman.

"The English have usually been able to persuade themselves that there is a serious moral purpose behind whatever they enjoy," quips P. Mason in his book *The English Gentleman. The Rise and Fall of an Ideal* (1982: 83). He goes on to discuss the elevation of fox-hunting to a cult status and outlines the careers of three men whose achievements turned them into national heroes.

Assheton Smith, described by Napoleon as "a premiere chasseur d'Angleterre", was an unequalled rider and huntsman. A master of hounds for forty-eight years, he made his reputation just after fox-hunting had been metamorphosed from the leisurely pastime of the 18th-century country squire into a brisk and competitive sport, more reminiscent of cross-country racing, involving breakneck speed and daredevil leaps over fences for riders who wanted to be in at the kill. Smith was an absolutely fearless rider who hunted his hounds four days a week, sometimes six, until he was seventy-eight. His principle was always to be with his hounds and no fence was too high for him. He was phenomenally good with horses, having a very light hand on the rein, and could tame even the most incorrigible brute. His energy was staggering. He could ride thirty miles or more to a meet and back the same day, hunt all day and every day and still have energy left over for his extensive business interests, politics and even ship-building. He was considered one of the best batsmen in England and was ready to take on any opponent with his fists. Yet he was not a typical "Corinthian", for he did not drink or bet and attended the church regularly.

George Osbaldeston, "the Squire of England", was more "Corinthian" in outlook. He was not a hard drinker but loved to bet, race and completely neglected the management of his estates. An incorrigible spendthrift, he whittled away his vast fortune and died in poverty. Business and politics bored

him, hunting and matches being his consuming passion. He was a master of hounds for most of his life and hunted six days a week. What made him famous, though, were his matches. Matches almost always involved betting, which was not confined to the gentry but crossed the class barrier to form the link between the sporting gentlemen and their servants. Matches could be made on all sorts of fights or individual feats of endurance. The Squire was willing to make matches on everything, backing himself at pigeon-shooting, partridge-shooting, trotting, boxing, driving, tennis, cricket and billiards. His most famous match was to ride two hundred miles at Newmarket in less than ten hours, all rests and changes included. Using twenty-eight horses, each riding a four-mile heat, he accomplished the race under nine hours. This was done for a bet. For pleasure Osbaldeston is known to have ridden seventeen miles from Northampton to hunt, cover twenty-five miles during the hunt and seventeen miles on the way back to Northampton, then riding relays of hacks forty-four miles from there to Cambridge to go to a ball the same evening, dance all night and ride another forty miles back to the meet next morning. For our purposes his most interesting match was undertaken when Osbaldeston was challenged that it was very well for him to drive a coach so well with a team of his own horses but he would not achieve such spectacular results with the horses the professional coachman had to deal with. The Squire accepted the challenge and allowed the challenger to load the coach of his choice. The man chose a London stage coach with the most notorious team and daredevil driver and packed the coach with the heaviest passengers he could find (eighteen Lifeguardsmen), all to no avail. The Squire's expertise overcame the greatest odds. In the circles which mattered to him, among hunters, racing men, boxers, fellow squires, he achieved his desired aim – fame as a sportsman of skill, endurance and unflinching courage.

Even more famous was Hugh Cecil Lowther, 5th earl of Lonsdale, whose interests were almost as wide as the Squire's but his exploits were better known due to their wide coverage in the newspapers. He too was fond of matches of all kinds and spent money as if there was no tomorrow. For us again his most interesting match was the one against the earl of Shrewsbury – a twenty-mile drive in four stages from Dorking to Reigate. In the first stage a one-horse buggy was to be driven, in the second the two-horse trap, in the third a four-in-hand and in the fourth each contestant was to ride postillion with two horses and an open phaeton. Lonsdale's rival backed out at the last moment but Lonsdale carried out the drive nevertheless and at furious speed, his time being a little under an hour. A keen boxer, he travelled to the United States to test his skill against the reigning heavyweight champion of the world and beat him in the ring. He fought several battles in court to make boxing legal, was instrumental in starting a system of classifying boxers according to weight and contributed considerably to the drawing up of Queensberry Rules governing modern boxing. He spent lavishly on hunting, racing and personal magnificence, yet retained the common touch which made him hugely popular among the lower

classes. The extent of his renown can be gauged from the public subscription for a present on the occasion of his fiftieth wedding anniversary. Money poured in from all over the world, totalling a quarter of a million pounds, for him to dispose as he pleased, all in recognition of his services to sport. Summing up the achievements of such “Corinthians” and their lesser imitators, Mason writes:

Courage, pugnacity, readiness to take a risk, disregard for money – often reckless extravagance, often a callous disregard for the feelings of other people – these were qualities of the eccentric sporting characters who flourished in the first half of the 19th century. Some of them were great nobles; some were wealthy squires. Most of them had a wide popular backing which continued through the century. Their behaviour was not always decorous but they were liked and admired. (Ibid.: 81)

Physical prowess and courage have of course been the hallmarks of the warrior class through ages, but could there have been something more behind the readiness of the “Corinthians” to take on any physical challenge. Mason asks:

Assheton Smith, like Osbaldeston and Lonsdale, was a *card*, a term that later in the century was used of a *character*, a man with sufficient confidence to do unconventional things and get away with them. Yet with all this self-confidence went that fierce readiness to show himself as good as any man with his fists. Was this perhaps something to do with 1789 and the proclamation of liberty and equality on the other side of the Channel? Can it be that among Englishmen who drew wealth from the land there was a feeling well below the conscious level, that to justify privilege a man should be able to show that he could take on anyone and show himself equal or better in the most physical way possible? (Ibid.: 87)

When Lammas, and the reader, first encounter Wyse on the scene of the coach accident and later meet him again at an inn, they cannot help it but be struck by the baronet’s sheer magnificence. Effortlessly taking charge and scolding the driver for having ignored his advice to use short wheel reins, his own particular fad, he disposes of the passengers and issues orders to the stricken crew who obviously know him well and hasten to obey his commands. On closer inspection later at the inn, Lammas has to admit to himself that Wyse is “a very splendid creature”:

Sir Turnour Wyse, having shed his dreadnought, and submitted to the attentions of his valet, shone like Phoebus in his strength. He had a strong square face, a thought too full in the cheeks, but most wholesomely browned by weather. There was nothing flamboyant in his appearance. His dark hair, cut short in the sportsman’s style, was innocent of pomatum; his fine white hands had but one ring; he had a plain bunch of seals at his fob. And yet everything about him breathed an air of extreme fashion, the finest and most workmanlike fashion. His coat, cut full about the pockets and of some tint between plum and claret, fitted his broad shoulders like a glove. His plain neckcloth was perfect tied, and his long hunting waistcoat had not a crease in it. His breeches were elegantly

shaped, his boots seemed moulded to his legs, and his tops had the bloom of horse-chestnut. But the man's clothes, even his figure and face, were the least of him; what made him impressive was his air of arrogant, well-bred security. Here was one whom none of life's checks would find wanting. (FF 55–56)

Here, in a nutshell, is the essence of the sartorial revolution carried out by Beau Brummell in the early years of the nineteenth century. A pioneer of rigorous understatement in reaction to the diamond-studded excesses of the previous century, Brummell took it upon himself single-handedly to reform aristocratic male dress, taking his inspiration from the perfect proportions of classical sculpture. I. Kelly has in *Beau Brummell. The Ultimate Dandy* traced the impact of Apollo Belvedere on the evolution of men's fashion and manners in the second half of the eighteenth century. A cast of Apollo Belvedere from Rome had been first exhibited in London in 1753 and was to make its impact felt in English homes through engravings and plaster casts. Not only were the faultless lines of the body but the effortless superiority of the pose and expression of the statue to set the standard of new manliness. The Greek Revival put a new premium on the sexual allure of the male body by favouring clinging garments which revealed rather than concealed the lines of the body beneath. The "bravura physicality" (2005: 172) of the Elgin marbles, first exhibited in London in 1806, "gave further authenticity and acceptability to the look" (ibid.) which was essentially equestrian, having evolved from English riding clothes. The casual sportswear of the day – Hessian riding boots, riding breeches and cutaway riding jackets sculpted to fit the body and suggest the muscular magnificence of classical sculpture underneath – was utilized to give a semblance of healthy sportsmanship even to the idlest habitués of salons and boudoirs. The new urban uniform pioneered by Brummell eschewed gaudy colours in favour of pale shades in trousers and waistcoats, mimicking Greek statuary, enlivened by the sober dark monochrome of the jacket and the pristine white of the shirt and cravat. The restrained chic of this semi-military urban uniform permitted only a minimal display of jewellery, Brummell's own being restricted to an occasional plain ring and a few links of his watch-chain. His sartorial savvy apart, Brummell's brand of performed masculinity was to have a lasting impact on how English men behaved. Emotionally unavailable, cultivating the air of elegant insolence, Brummell's brand of poise, dry humour and an air of languorous indifference became emblematic of British masculinity, the *sangfroid* much envied by foreigners.

The Olympian indifference of Wyse the English Apollo infuriates Lammas. In his provincial innocence he had hitherto revered the world of wealth and privilege but now, coming face to face with the new metropolitan chic, he is outraged. Wyse has just insolently taken in the homespun appearance of his friend:

The man had not been uncivil, nor had he been contemptuous /.../ He had scarcely even been condescending. He had simply by his manner blotted out

Jock from the world, ignored him as a thing too trivial for a thought. His god-like aloofness was the cruellest insolence that he had ever witnessed /.../ The great world had shown itself to the humble provinces and withered them with its stare. (FF 58)

Having been so far presented only with the outward aspect of the English baronet, as he appears to the quite prejudiced Scottish eyes, we get a glimpse of the inner workings of his mind when we accompany him on his journey to the house where he expects to find Belses, the desolate air of the Northumbrian moors having quite shaken his usual composure. A true aristocrat, he has embarked on his journey motivated by personal honour:

He had come north on an errand which bored him, but which he could not shirk. No man had ever insulted him with impunity, and at whatever trouble to himself he must bring this young whippersnapper to instant account. It was not his reputation that moved him, for that he believed to be impregnable: it was his own self-respect. He could not be comfortable in his mind while one walked unpunished who had questioned his breeding or his courage. (FF 92)

It had not been his initial scheme to hunt out his adversary “like a fox from a hole” (ibid.). The whole business of pursuing an unworthy opponent, he vaguely feels, is dangerously imperilling his “grand, rock-like, self-sufficiency, his complete confidence in life” (ibid.). An occasion soon presents itself for regaining his composure. An insolent inn-keeper, with “the air of a dangerous bull “ (FF 93), refuses to serve him and orders him to leave. Wyse's peace of mind is instantly restored, for “[h]ere was a surly ruffian to be brought to heel, and that was a task with which he was familiar” (ibid.). Eager to show off his expertise in the noble art of fisticuffs, he readily confronts his adversary who advances on him menacingly. But taking a closer look at the aristocrat, the village bully knows himself beaten and in his recognition of this, adds another facet to Wyse's character, that of a nobleman ready to prove his manhood by taking on anyone with his fists:

For what he saw was no fleshy, dandified traveller, as he had judged from the voice and the figure as it had appeared on the box seat. Sir Turnour stood on his toes as lightly as a runner, his strong, clenched hands white at the knuckles, his poise easy but as charged with swift power as a thundercloud is charged with fire. The innkeeper marked the square shoulders, the corded muscles of the shapely neck, the slim flanks – above all, he marked the vigilant and scornful eye. He was himself a noted wrestler, but he knew that he could not give this man a fall, for he would never get to grips with him. The other would dance round him on those light feet, and an arm like a flail would smite him into unconsciousness. He was a bold man but no fool, and he recognized the trained fighter, no genteel amateur, but one bred in a tough school. So he surrendered at discretion and touched a damp forelock. (FF 94–95)

His next instance to rectify his character for the reader comes when he accidentally stumbles upon the chief villain of the book. With perspicacity born

of experience, he can easily penetrate the latter's disguise of virtuous rusticity and perceive a fellow dandy capable of the evil excesses his insolent Byronic manner seems to imply. When he finally meets Belses, whom he discovers lying in sickbed, he is at first outraged by the latter's unmanly pleas to help him but relents, and having received further proof of the villain's villainy, and having been called a lightweight by the latter, a Beau Brummel who should return to his dressing-glasses and powder-puffs, he resolves to seek personal revenge and thus further the cause of justice. Not for nothing is our squire a Justice of the Peace. What he initially refuses to swallow is the innocence of the villain's wife. It is intriguing that while all middle class Scotsmen in the book fall under the heroine's spell and become her champions with very little actual proof as to her innocence, the book's only English hero remains highly sceptical about his fellow countrywoman's merits until the very end of the book. And then it is not the lady's charm that converts him to her cause but her love for her dog. This accords well with the reputation of the English as great lovers of animals but also highlights the supposed lack of romance in their souls. Definitely more worldly-wise than the provincial Scots, Wyse distrusts tragic romantic heroines on principle. Ever more interested in horseflesh than women, this representative of what Napoleon called the nation of shopkeepers is briefly attracted to the earthy and pragmatic off-spring of an enterprising Dutch ship-owner turned Scottish landed gentleman.

Though Lammas and Wyse are both instrumental in foiling the assassination attempt of the Prime Minister, their approach could not be more different. Lammas, who is no sportsman in the English sense, is painfully aware of his own inadequacy and, fired by love and hope but ignorant of any martial skills, he can make only a futilely brave attempt to rescue the lady. No doubts at all beset aristocratic Wyse. Having set his mind on punishing the villain, his rage becomes an elemental force. While Lammas relies on stealth and cunning, Wyse needs no subterfuge. He openly storms the villain's house. Finding him gone, he masterminds the destruction of planted evidence against his wife and sets about pursuing him with all the air of a seasoned campaigner. His mind completely at ease, he can take pleasure in showing off his superb horsemanship on the way. On the first leg of the journey he tames an entirely unruly horse with ease and on the second hijacks a Royal Mail coach with the respectful cooperation of its driver and guards. What follows is in essence a 'match', Wyse testing his skill as a coach driver against the professionals. Proudly knocking minutes off their scheduled time at each stage and carrying out impossible manouevres on most unpromising roads, he draws constant praise from the driver and his admiring friends. Arriving at the scene of the last confrontation in the nick of time, he saves the life of Lammas and the lady whose firm champion he now is. He shoots the villain and restores the lady's sanity by producing her spaniel whom he has thoughtfully brought along. Fair and magnanimous, he plays down his own decisive involvement in the affair

with a very English understatement giving all the credit to Lammas: “My part was only a trifling bit of coachmanship and a lucky shot. There’s a fellow that played the master hand.” (FF 274) Lammas, on his part, has lost his initial hostility towards Wyse and can now think of the Englishman as embodying in all the world what is “sane and wholesome and human” (FF 249). For Wyse he has now “not only that respect due to one who represented in all things his exact opposite, but affection for a human creature so massive and so nobly secure in its own code of life” (FF 275). It befalls to Jock who had witnessed the whole magnificence of the baronet’s performance on the road to deliver the final judgement on Englishness:

Yon’s England /.../ We don’t breed them like that in the north. We’re maybe cleverer and quicker, and we’re just as brave when it comes to the pinch, but we’re cockleshells compared to yon even keel. If I saw much of him I’d be always differing from him, but, man, I should also be dumb with admiration. /.../ He’s like the stone in the Bible – whoever falls on it will be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. (FF 275–276)

**Ludovick Gustavus Arbuthnot/Sandy (*Greenmantle*,
The Three Hostages, *The Courts of the Morning*, *The Island of Sheep*)**

Ludovick Gustavus Arbuthnot, later 16th Baron Clanroyden, bursts onto the scene with irresistible picturesqueness. He makes his first appearance in *Greenmantle* as Hannay’s convalescing friend after the battle of Loos where he had saved Hannay’s life. From the start he stands for a type of aristocratic adventurer who had been called into being by three generations steeped in chivalric lore and the apogee of the British imperial mission:

Lean brown men from the ends of the earth may be seen on the London pavements now and then in creased clothes, walking with the light outland step, slinking into clubs as if they could not remember whether or not they belonged to them. From them you may get news of Sandy. Better still, you will hear of him at little forgotten fishing ports where the Albanian mountains dip to the Adriatic. If you struck a Mecca pilgrimage the odds are you would meet a dozen of Sandy’s friends in it. In shepherds’ huts in the Caucasus you will find bits of his cast-off clothing, for he has a knack of shedding garments as he goes. In the caravanserais of Bokhara and Samarkand he is known, and there are shikaris in the Pamirs who still speak of him round their fires. If you were going to visit Petrograd or Rome or Cairo it would be no use asking him for introductions; if he gave them, they would lead you into strange haunts. But if Fate compelled you to go to Lhasa or Yarkand or Seistan he could map out your road for you and pass the word to potent friends. We call ourselves insular, but the truth is that we are the only race on earth that can produce men capable of getting inside the skin of remote peoples. Perhaps the Scots are better than the English, but we’re all a

thousand per cent better than anybody else. Sandy was the wandering Scot carried to the pitch of genius. In old days he would have led a crusade or discovered a new road to the Indies. To-day he merely roamed as the spirit moved him. (G 24)

Based largely on two intensely chivalrous men who carved out singular careers as explorers, adventurers and knights of empire, this, in J. Adam Smith's words (1965: 256), least probable but best documented of Buchan's characters required little invention.

The inspiration behind Sandy's character was Buchan's Oxford friend and a companion of many adventures, Aubrey Herbert, son of the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, who was a polyglot traveller of legendary charm and dash who had travelled widely in the then little explored East and had twice been offered the throne of Albania. When the fictional Sandy is introduced to the reader by Sir Walter Bullivant of the Foreign Office, he has a huge but narrow reputation restricted to a few friends and people in the know earned by madcap adventures:

There's a good deal about him in this office. He rode through Yemen, which no white man ever did before. The Arabs let him pass, for they thought him stark mad and argued that the hand of Allah was heavy enough on him without their efforts. He's blood-brother to every kind of Albanian bandit. Also he used to take a hand in Turkish politics, and got a huge reputation. Some Englishman was once complaining to old Mahmoud Shevkat about the scarcity of statesmen in Western Europe, and Mahmoud broke in with, "Have you not the Honourable Arbuthnot?" (G 18)

This is Herbert's record exactly, as would be Sandy's high-strung nerves and intense romanticism. When Herbert died in 1923 Buchan wrote to a friend:

The most delightful and brilliant survivor from the days of chivalry /.../ he was the most extraordinary combination of tenderness and gentleness, with the most insane gallantry that I have ever known – a sort of survivor from crusading times. (Quoted in FitzHerbet 1984: 1).

According to Herbert's recent biographer M. FitzHerbert, 'chivalrous' appears to be an epithet used with "tedious regularity" when Herbert is described in memoirs, doubtless partly because chivalry was much admired in the period and authors predictably singled out this facet of his character but also because in his very chivalry Herbert conformed to a type, belonging to a generation to whom a particular type of chivalry came naturally being the product of their age:

Edward Cadogan, his exact contemporary at Eton and Balliol, wrote: 'Aubrey was cast in a mould different from the normal individual. He was the embodiment of chivalry and was therefore, I suppose, born out of due time and place, although it is difficult to determine to what age in history in all the world his soul belonged.'

To Cadogan it was not obvious, as it is now, that Aubrey was entirely a man of his times. Cadogan belonged to the same generation as Aubrey, and could not

discern, as later generations can, the true lineaments of his age. These sons and grandsons of the men who built the Empire were themselves neither builders nor destroyers. They were marked neither by the purpose and energy of their predecessors nor by the guilt and hesitation of their successors. Their inheritance was an ease around the world, and an infinite self-confidence. Following their knightly imaginations, wandering across the face of the earth, they had no axe to grind. Theirs was, briefly, an age of chivalry, soon to be laid at rest in the trenches of the Great War, an age in which Aubrey Herbert had a natural place. (1984: 2–3)

In 1920 Buchan met T. E. Lawrence whose career he had boosted during the war by drawing the attention of the American press to his exploits. Sandy in *The Courts of the Morning* takes on some of his features, even shrinking a few inches as a compliment to Lawrence's modest height. Lawrence had led the Arab revolt in Mesopotamia and Palestine and his guerrilla tactics which Buchan greatly admired are utilized in Sandy's fictional guerrilla campaign in Olifa. Lawrence was likewise a man who had immersed himself in chivalric literature, a man 'born out of his time' who tried to compensate for his social disadvantages by searching for ways of re-entering the lost world of chivalry, creating for himself a campaign which came as close as possible in spirit and style to the crusades and *chansons de geste* he so admired. Before the war he had spent four years excavating for the British Museum in Syria where he had cast himself as a squire to the local peasants, relishing his experience of imperial paternalism. Combining latter-day knight-errantry with bringing law and order to the natives, he could indulge himself in his favourite role of, in his own words, "the protector-of-the-poor-and-enemy-of-all-the-rich-and-in-authority" (James 2000: 64). Besides his guerrilla tactics, this stance is noticeably also present in the fictional Sandy the friend of all the downtrodden in *The Courts of the Morning*.

Sandy is a younger son, so he has had to make his own career in the world, opting for adventurous globe-trotting and diplomatic service. D. Cannadine has perceptively discussed the phenomenon of patrician globe-trotting in the context of the social and cultural disintegration of the country society in the forty-odd years before the Great War. As the plutocrats and middle classes invaded the shires, the resentful and embattled older elite took to travelling as never before. Always a travelling class, the aristocracy sought out new playgrounds in ever more and more remote quarters of the globe in their effort to put as much distance between themselves and the inferior social groups beneath as was geographically possible. They preferred secluded nooks and corners of the already depressingly well-explored globe to find societies that were uncontaminated by modern ideas that had undermined their position at home:

Whereas in the eighteenth century the British aristocracy had despised the despotic politics and squalid conditions of so much of abroad, some of them now saw in its remote, unspoilt recesses their last best hope – where towns and

industry were non-existent, where hierarchy and paternalism prevailed, where the ancient values of chivalry and honour were still preserved. (1996: 382)

The combination of romance, chivalry and alienation experienced at home could give feats of exploration a quest-like intensity not unlike that of a knight-errant. The allure of distant places could be conveniently combined with diplomatic service where scions of great British families could talk as equals with native princes and nomad chiefs above the heads of lowly traders and middle-class politicians. (Ibid.: 370–383)

Sandy's career before the war is typical indeed. Before he buries himself in the anonymity of the commissioned ranks of the New Army, he has been an honorary attaché at various embassies – a convenient cover for professional spying – and fraternized with eastern mystics and gurus, not to mention mere gypsies, blood-brotherhood with the chief of the Turkish ones furnishing him with the appropriate guise for the adventures of *Greenmantle*. As the leader of the Companions of Rosy Hours he so successfully merges his identity with the gypsies that the rather staid and cautious Hannay is alternately frightened and lost in admiration, likening him to “some savage king out of an older world” (G 167). In *The Three Hostages* he completely fools Hannay and the villain-genius Medina by impersonating the eastern mystic and guru Kharama. Sandy comes into his own in *The Courts of the Morning* where instead of being a subsidiary character he gets an adventure which is completely of his own devising and finds love. The book also opens up Sandy's background a bit and unsurprisingly we find the plight of the old landowning classes fully represented.

An intelligence officer during the war who has briefly been the awaited prophet of the Muslim world, then taken Baghdad with general Maude and being “something at Simla”, an administrative officer in the new British mandate Iraq but forced to return home because his father is ailing to assume the responsibilities of the laird in his native glen, Hannay cannot see him settling down in *The Three Hostages*:

He had written to me from all kinds of queer places, but he never appeared to be coming home. /.../ I had seen his elder brother's death in the papers, so he was now Master of Clanroyden and heir to the family estates, but I didn't imagine that that would make a Scotch laird of him. (TH 36)

The Courts of the Morning opens with a depressing scene at Laverlaw, Sandy's estate in the Borders, where what is said can be partly ascribed to Sandy's putting his friends off the scent to have free hands in Olifa, but the mood is despondent enough. Laverlaw is an earthly paradise and Sandy has come into full possession of his heritage after his father's death but his reaction is not what Hannay the new and ecstatic landowner has expected from the scion of an old house:

Laverlaw is a very good imitation of the end of the world. You alight at a wayside station in a Border valley, and drive for eight miles up a tributary glen between high green hills; then, when the stream has grown small and you think that the glen must stop, it suddenly opens into an upland paradise – an amphitheatre of turf and woodland which is the park, and in the heart of it an old stone castle. The keep was once a peel-tower, famous in a hundred ballads, and the house which had grown round dated mostly from the sixteenth century. I had never been there before, for the old Lord Clanroyden had lived sick and solitary for years, and Sandy had only succeeded in the previous February. When I arrived in the early gloaming, with that green cup swimming in amber light and the bell-heather on the high ground smouldering in the sunset, I had to rub my eyes to make sure that the place was not a dream. I thought it the right kind of home for Sandy, a fairy-tale fortress lying secret in the hills, from which he could descend to colour the prose of the world.

Sandy met me at the gates and made me get out of the car and walk the rest of the way with him. In his shocking old tweeds, with his lithe figure, his girlish colouring, and his steady, glowing eyes, he fitted well into this fantastic landscape. You could see that he was glad to have me there, and he made me welcome with all his old warmth, but in the half-mile walk I felt a subtle change in him. His talk didn't bubble over as it used to, and I had a feeling that he was rather making conversation. I wondered if being a peer and a landowner and that sort of thing had sobered him, but I promptly dismissed the idea. I wasn't prepared to believe that external circumstance could have any effect on one who had about as much worldliness as a fakir with his begging-bowl. (CM 5)

It is precisely this lack of worldliness that is at the heart of Sandy's trouble. Hannay, a middle-class colonial and an eminently practical man, finds it difficult to comprehend, but pinpoints the root cause of Sandy's dilemma exactly:

We dined in what had been the hall of the thirteenth-century keep – stone walls, a fireplace like a cave, and Jacobean rafters and panelling. Sandy wore the green coat of some Border club, and sat like a solemn sprite in the great chair at the head of his table /.../ The ancient candelabra, which gave a dim religious light, and the long lines of mailed or periwigged Arbuthnots on the wall made the place too heavy a setting for one whom I had always known as a dweller in tents. I felt somehow as if the old Sandy were being shackled and stifled by this feudal magnificence. (CM 6)

To refer to Cannadine again, the embattled territorial elite, gradually ousted by new money from domains and spheres where they had felt secure and self-confident, had responded by turning their backs to the social system that had begun to break down and took themselves off to distant climes. The more they travelled, the less time they spent on their estates, thus further undermining their ancient role as resident and dutiful landowners and contributing to the irrevocable decay and disintegration of both the London society and their county communities which in turn added to their own frustration. Going on

quests of knight-errantry to societies seemingly more amenable than their own to find refuge from the encroachments of modernity contributed to the patricians' feeling of restless- and rootlessness. What was worse, better means of transport and the growing tourist trade were opening up the formerly unreachable places to the common man and deprived even travel of a sense of exclusiveness. What in the pre-war years had been the privilege and pleasure of the few, by the after-war years had lost its glamour. Knight-errantry did not long survive the war, its great pre-war practitioners being either dead or disillusioned. (1996: 342–343, 383)

The world has grown too small for Sandy too. He writes off the Roylances' plan to go and explore the East on their honeymoon in tones of resignation and disillusion:

The East, he said, was simply dusty bric-à-brac, for the spirit had gone out of it, and there were no mysteries left, only half-baked Occidentalism. "Go to Samarkand, and you will get the chatter of Bloomsbury intellectuals. I expect in Lhasa they are discussing Freud." (CM 6)

He dissuades them from going to South America too as not worth the effort but here he has an ulterior motive, for his own great adventure is planned to take place there. South America, to quote Cannadine once more, "lured only the most adventurous patricians" (1996: 377). It had a difficult and largely impenetrable terrain and the British consular presence was minimal. For the British traveller it was still largely a terra incognita and it is not difficult to see why Sandy's last quest in the late 1920s should be placed there and in a fictional country at that.

By common consent the flower of aristocratic youth had perished in the fields of Flanders. But those who survived sometimes envied the dead, for all the negative trends intensified in the interwar years and contributed to patrician bitterness. Despite their huge sacrifice in the field, after the war they had to preside over the complete dismantling of their world. Feudalism was dead and most patricians, both young and old "contemplated the future with gloom and despondency that sometimes bordered on alarm" (Cannadine 1996: 85). Some developed an acute sense of uselessness and shame for their unearned privileges but their position and breeding made the choice of possible occupations a limited one. Thus we see Sandy complaining to Hannay in a characteristic vein:

"I want a job," he declared. /.../ "I was meant by Providence to be in service, and to do work under discipline – not for what it brought me, but because it had to be done. I'm a bad case of the interiority complex. When I see one of my shepherds at work, or the hands coming out of a factory, I'm ashamed of myself. They all have their niche, and it is something that matters. Whereas I am a cumberer of the ground. If I want to work I've got to make a job for myself, and the one motive is personal vanity. I tell you, I'm in very real danger of losing my self-respect." (CM 10)

His trouble is compounded by the disintegration of the traditional political elite and the invasion of middle-class career politicians which we observed worried already Lewis Haystoun in *The Half-Hearted*. Things have only got worse and Sandy cannot contain his disgust when he contemplates the political scene:

“Good Lord, Dick, I can’t begin to tell you how I loathe the little squirrel’s cage of the careerist. All that solemn twaddle about trifles. Oh, I daresay it’s got to be done by somebody, but not by me. If I touched politics I’d join the Labour Party, not because I think them less futile than the others, but because as yet they haven’t got such a larder of loaves and fishes.” (CM 9–10)

He yearns for old disinterested service of the aristocratic kind which is no longer readily available. In the modern mercantile world his talents are redundant and he no longer feels that he fits in. Born “out of due season, and mighty discontented with his lot” (CM 9), he nostalgically recalls the old days when he and his friends had “a rather nice little Round Table” which is “all broken up now and the wood turned into cigar-boxes for wedding presents” and he alone is “the old buccaneer marooned on a rock, watching his ancient companions passing in ocean liners” (CM 10–11). He is convinced that he is the last of the Clanroyden clan.

Here he has not reckoned with the resilience and determination of rich American girls who were making their own mark on the British marriage market. Not much is known about Sandy’s love life, except his self-confessed inability to grow up and a brief romantic disturbance at Oxford when a girl singing some old romantic songs had made him feel like falling in love. However, in *Greenmantle* his friends had witnessed an embarrassingly passionate episode between him and Hilda von Einem, the German super-spy and *femme fatale* if ever there was one. Hannay ascribes this momentary weakening of resolve to Sandy’s fever-pitch imagination, for such a misalliance would be unthinkable for a British officer and gentleman. Sandy justifies their trust in him by fighting his battle with what can only be construed by them as physical desire in their presence and rejecting her love in the name of duty to his country. Yet he loves truly and deeply, rushing to her rescue unheeding of the shells exploding around him but the genre does not allow controversial and complicated solutions, so Madame von Einem is killed by a shell-fragment and Sandy can bury her reverently. Intriguing as this love affair is, politically the British-German alliance would have been unthinkable after the conflict had been unleashed, so she has to take on all the characteristics of the enemy, especially Germany’s feared intellectual potential (she is a veritable superwoman) and her emotional defects (megalomania and humourlessness). As a temptress, she can only procure man’s downfall and to underline this venal characteristic, she is shown to be the murderer of men, having killed the venerable muslim religious men in her employ. Her power of seduction the ever-cautious Hannay ascribes to hypnotism and Sandy to madness, for

gentleman's love can only be reserved for good women who deserve it by not being pushy or unduly clever. Hannay the middle-class man chooses an aristocratic Englishwoman, a politically proper alliance for a dominion man who wants to put down roots in the mother country and bolster his improved social status by a sanction from the ruling class. Sandy, who has seen the world and probably finds the domestic marriage market rather staid, opts for an international alliance, choosing to settle down with a niece of an American plutocrat. This is politically eminently suitable and even symbolic, for they work together to overthrow the government of Olifa to make the country more amenable to the invasion of American capital. British expertise in dealing with recalcitrant natives and American financial savvy must have seemed a promising mix in world affairs before the extent to which the USA had high-jacked Britain's leading role in the world was fully realized. We are not told about Sandy's financial situation but a timely transatlantic dowry saved quite a few estates from the auctioneer's hammer as landowners were forced to sell owing to agricultural depression which had set in in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and refused to go away.

Sandy the knight errant and perennial schoolboy until he meets his wife has got entangled in Olifa's affairs out of the sheer pleasure of the game. Revolution and civil war in a country which at the author's discretion offers opportunities for adventure in different climes and terrains and a battle field where all sorts of dream campaigns can be acted out, even the modern version of Leonidas's defence of Thermopylæ, are his natural playground and an extension of schoolboy dreams and games. The link with public school is reinforced with the introduction of Sandy's old school friend and fellow adventurer Lariarty who has, however, opted for the wrong side and has to make amends. The only English gentleman among Castor's Conquistadors, he is the one whom Sandy addresses when meeting the cut-throats and Lariarty saves his life by agreeing to listen to him as a fellow gentleman. He has fallen low due to an unspecified scandal and has become a true renegade but one cannot distrust a fellow Old Etonian and Sandy inexplicably to all except his own code of honour lets him go with characteristic words:

He is free to go where he likes. He was at school with me, and I owe him a good turn for this evening. (CM 139)

This seems foolhardy in the extreme, the more so that he has just told him and his fellows all about his campaign and even the location of his secret base to win time and they will use it against him with devastating effect, hounding him out of his mountain base and finally murdering Castor. Nevertheless, the gentlemanly code of honour forbids thinking ill of a fellow gentleman and this overblown sense of trust in good breeding has to be justified. Yet Lariarty has fallen so low that Sandy has to pointedly remind him of the chivalric code *twice* before he takes the hint. The second occasion is even more glaring than the first.

Lariarty has joined the reconnaissance force of Olifa's army and has sought out Sandy's secret passageway from the mountains to the plains. He is captured with the rest of the advance guard of the invasion forces but is let go at once without a single question or harsh word. Instead, he is offered a meal, money and a horse to take him anywhere he wants to go. The lesson is so pointed that Lariarty is lost for words. But his reformation has already begun because he has lost his acquired continental chic and imperturbable manner. His appearance is as disreputable as Sandy's, a sure sign that he is reverting to his old values. This is borne out soon enough when Lariarty comes to warn Sandy in the hour of his triumph of the impending assassination of Castor. Physically broken but spiritually restored, he accompanies him on his journey to save Castor and is killed trying to protect him.

Loving a game where the chances are hopelessly against him, compulsively testing the limits of his strength to the point of physical and mental exhaustion, Sandy is easily bored when the adventure element is removed and the day-to-day mundane business of administration is required. When he is offered the post of the Gobernador of Olifa with a prospect of one day becoming Olifa's king, he turns it down. He has had an adventure, assisted friends, found a wife and proved himself. It is time to settle down.

In *The Island of Sheep* Hannay and Sandy, two middle-aged men who feel that they have become too comfortable in their settled lives get involved in an old feud which takes them to another fictional location, an island in the northern Atlantic.

Sandy has extended his range of expertise to the Far East and his accidental purchase of a jade tablet in China ties him in with the problems of a neurotic Viking who will cheat him out of victory. Buchan was interested in northern sagas and has created an unspecified location where that mythical world could come to life in its modern yet archaic guise. The Island of Sheep is an emphatically spiritual place, as Hannay's friend the stockbroker Lombard points out to the reader who might have missed the spiritual journey aspect of the adventure. He has seen the light and plans to return to the island to recapture the youthful spirit of adventure which he was in danger of losing in his comfortable suburban existence. For Sandy it means the full completion of his Oliferan adventure and he picks up the challenge with alacrity, only to be outdone by a man ever inch not a hero. It is doubtful whether Buchan planned it so but there is poignant symbolism in the denouement and in the particular way Sandy's career ends.

Haraldsen, the Norlander whose father was an international adventurer and professional treasure-hunter in a big way back in the heady days of the scramble for Africa, is a miserable failure. His father's dead opposite in everything, he needs the assistance of other gentlemen to cope with his personal affairs. A target for blackmail by an international gang of adventurers, he has to be sheltered and protected by Hannay and Sandy lest he be forced to hand over his

huge fortune or lose his daughter. Hannay's manor in the Cotswolds and even Sandy's own Laverlaw in the fastness of Border hills are too civilized and law-abiding places to have a final show-down, so Sandy insists on taking the action to a more primitive and backward location, Haraldsen's native Norlands, an island chain in the northern Atlantic which can be trusted to be suitably isolated and rough to have some old-fashioned straight-forward action. He has clearly pictured an old-fashioned chivalric campaign, the dramatic last stand of a Viking chief on his own turf surrounded by his stout young retainers loyal to the death if necessary to protect their lord and master. However, having never been to the Norlands, he has not reckoned with the possibility that modernity might have invaded even this distant outpost of feudalism.

He has gone through the correct motions with the dedication of a connoisseur. The ritual of the challenge has been formally enacted though the adversary is long known and has declared his hand. D'Ingraville, the French air ace has been brought back from the dead and elevated to genius to have a worthy opponent for Sandy. In *The Courts of the Morning* he was just one of the leftovers of the Great War and misfits who could not find a place in civilian life after the heady days of fighting in the air. In *The Island of Sheep* he is given a pedigree and an ancestral castle to match Sandy's long lineage. On the eve of the open battle Sandy ritually travels to his castle in the Haute Savoie to be entertained in the old style and we learn that D'Ingraville's family goes back to the Crusades and his forbears once owned half Haute Savoie. Now impoverished, the man has "some rags of gentility left" (IS 131), so any underhand dealings between gentlemen are unthinkable. They can amicably drink each other's health and formalize the challenge. A further proof of his credentials as a worthy opponent is his sentimental love for his ancestral home which puts him on a par with Sandy as his complete equal in sentiment and honour.

It is a battle of wits and Sandy wins the first round by impersonating a member of D'Ingraville's gang and invading his inner circle. He has chosen a roundabout way of defending Haraldsen by subverting his enemy's plans but he has relied on Haraldsen doing his bit to defend his island. When he lands with the invasion party, not only does Haraldsen blow his carefully contrived cover but ruins his whole campaign by making all the preparations useless. He has not held up his end by neglecting to tell Sandy that his island is no longer a feudal stronghold. The stout young retainers of Sandy's imagination have left it in search of better wages and what is left is a couple of dotard servants and helpless women. Sandy can only join the defenders of Haraldsen's house and wait on developments. These further undermine the gentlemanly rules of combat and the very ethic of chivalry.

While Sandy and D'Ingraville preen and issue mutual compliments and challenges, Haraldsen goes berserk and rushes out of the hermit's cell where he was sent to get him out of action's way. Dressed in his native costume and having an elemental air about him, like some ancient Viking chief he rushes to

D'Ingraville, hoists him up in the air, runs to the cliff's edge and tosses him into the sea, thus robbing Sandy of the completion of his challenge and the worthy scion of the Savoyan lineage of a gentlemanly end. For the student of chivalry there is food for thought here. After a thousand years of perfecting the code, it has been completely reversed and naked savagery has been shown to triumph over refined manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve. Haraldsen had never mastered the gentlemanly code of honour in the English sense, yet he is shown as riding roughshod over it in his hour of triumph, reverting back to his ancestral brutality, to the *pre*-chivalric age of the primitive war band as if chivalry had never been. This impression is further reinforced by the kind of war band that defeats the remnant of D'Ingraville's gang. Whale-hunt has come to the island and has been redirected to help the ineffective English gentlemen in the house by Haraldsen's daughter. To Hannay who does not know who the men are who take over D'Ingraville's boat it seems a force from before the dawn of history itself:

It was as if a legion of trolls had suddenly sprung out of the earth, for these men were outside all my notions of humanity. They had the troll-like Norland dress, now stained beyond belief with mud and blood; their hair and eyes were like the wild things of the hills; the cries that came from their throats were not those of articulate-speaking men, and each had his shining, crimsoned lance.... Dimly I saw the boats enter the harbour and their occupants swarm into the *Tjaldar* like cannibal islanders attacking a trading ship. /.../ The sight of that maniacal horde had frozen my very marrow. (IS 191)

The world of the sagas has briefly sprung into life and though the modicum of civility is soon restored, the fact remains that chivalry failed where brute force triumphed and Sandy's carefully laid plans came to nought. However, he cannot be shown as completely ineffectual, so he scores a kind of intellectual victory over the criminals by showing that the jade tablet which was supposed to lead to hidden treasure and for which he was hunted by D'Ingraville is completely useless to a treasure-hunter. But even here the gesture rings hollow for he hands the tablet over to the defeated enemy with the air of a magnanimous victor being generous only to make fun of their lowbrow credulity by revealing at once that the treasure it contains is spiritual and by implication beyond their reach. The book ends with a fairy-tale medieval banquet but the unsettling air of failure remains.

Adam Melfort (*A Prince of the Captivity*)

With Adam Melfort Buchan returns to the quixotic iron dreamers of his youth. *A Prince of the Captivity* aspires to be many things. It is Buchan's longest novel, one of the most pretentious in scope and theme, endeavouring to be a (series of) thriller(s), a novel of ideas, a 'Condition of England' novel, a

romance of a spiritual quest and a political treatise rolled all into one. Its many strands of thought and reasoning lead in interesting directions of which we will select the one pertinent to our topic. Adam is a Victorian knight errant par excellence but the nature of his quest is dictated by the radically altered social and political conditions. The most obvious comment on the changing times is that this knight errant has to operate underground.

Sandy had spent lengthy periods in exotic disguises but lived his normal life above ground. His quixotry and legendary feats of endurance were known to a narrow circle of dedicatees but he also had a reputation in public life to rival that of his secret service. Adam drops out of public life completely and refuses to resurface even when the taint of his 'blemish' has been washed off many times over.

Adam the perfect knight errant is above all the perfect Victorian courtly lover. In many ways this courtly love is ironical but not treated with irony. It is an emphatically modern book treating modern concerns and chivalry is hardly mentioned but it is easy to see that Adam is a 'chevalier sans reproche' brought low by a callous temptress. A product of the cult of Victorian woman worship, he has imbibed its tenets so faithfully that he is unwilling and unable to reconsider his position even in the face of utter disillusion. A model soldier with a brilliant career ahead of him, he throws it all away to take upon himself the blame for his wife's forgery of a cheque.

There is a strong streak of asceticism and stoicism present in Adam from the start. His most characteristic feature is single-minded dedication to service. He is reportedly the most brilliant man at the Staff College for a generation who has little interest for anything outside his career. He is always in training, spending even his vacations on the continent exploring the future battle fields. The same dedication he brings to his marriage, entering into a self-abnegating service of his wife in the spirit of a knight lifting his lady onto a pedestal, only to discover that she is completely unworthy of his devotion. Another writer may have made out of this debacle a farce or a comedy but Buchan opts for Adam's martyrdom. This in turn sheds interesting light on the conventions of nineteenth-century woman worship in their Edwardian guise.

Camilla is a social butterfly, angelically pretty but mindless, the fairy-tale princess type whose airy graces and indifferent charm seem to hint at hidden depths or wild waywardness in need of manly control. Adam expects both and is disappointed to discover the complete vacuity of her mind. In another book she might be a comment on the limitations of the emphatically un-intellectual country-house upbringing but here she serves to underline Adam's tendency to the complete annihilation of the self and the kind of reasoning that casts the woman as a helpless child in need of protection and guidance. Though angelic-looking, she is actually a parody of the angel in the house, though this potential is not fully developed. She absolutely refuses to share his interests and pursuits, yawning in his face and laughing at his sentiments. Her soft melting eyes are

not an index to a sensitive heart but a gloss to disguise resolute and uncompromising selfishness. She is an uncaring and unfeeling mother and an indiscriminating hostess but Adam masochistically takes all the blame, reasoning from the position of the sole responsibility of the Victorian paterfamilias to order the lives of his dependants. Castigating himself for having been a romantic fool who had sought a goddess but found a dancing-girl, he schools himself to make reparation. Though she is a casual flirt in her sexless, superficial way and he a model of single-minded dedication, he takes the blame for infidelity, reasoning that, having been in love with a dream and not liking the waking reality, he had married her under false pretences and thus was guilty of infidelity from the start. Her complete vacuity makes her incapable of reform, so he lets her go her own way, paying all the bills and asking no questions. Ungrateful and heartless, she extends to him the same kind of indifference she does to her butler or chauffeur but he is always courteous and friendly. When the debts mount and the crash comes, Adam, out of self-imposed guilt, lies to the police that he had forced her to forge the cheque and goes to prison for two years, persuading himself that social disgrace was a small price to pay for protecting a fragile and helpless woman. Camilla quickly divorces him, cruelly citing desertion, but he nevertheless settles the better part of his fortune on her, leaving for himself enough to support mere existence, for his ruined prospects can no longer be called a life. She goes on to marry a hunting baronet but he has to find a new purpose to his life.

Loyalty and pity, largesse and generosity, protection of the weak and helpless (if Camilla can be considered as such in her self-seeking egotism), affability and courtesy, courage and valour – all these chivalric values Adam has displayed but instead of honour has found dishonour. What is more, he has erred against his own spiritual integrity by lying for the first time in his life in court. His aristocratic code of honour has been violated and we see his prison years being dedicated to the analysis of the problem of further conduct.

Aristocratic service in the ideal is selfless service. In Adam's case this ideal is taken to its logical extreme by combining it with utter Christian humility and the strong Calvinist belief in predestination. This heady combination quite obviously cannot find a proper outlet in the hedonistic, self-serving post-war years when all social structures are crumbling and old ideals thrown overboard. As is demonstrated by other characters in the book, even the best and most idealistic of them succumb to the temptations of worldliness sooner and later and betray their high ideals. Adam's singularity consists in his superhuman detachment, his personality being *rarefied* to such an extent that even he occasionally worries that he might be losing human touch. To others it is very clear that he operates in a value system which is out of the ken of mere mortals.

J. Rutherford above has discussed the norms of the enacted masculinity of the fin-de-siècle literature when Buchan started to write and created his early iron dreamers. He pointed out the literary heroes' inability to form normal

heterosexual relationships, their escape to the bright happy days of their boyhood in search of spiritual sustenance in an existence where perforce loneliness was elevated to a supreme virtue. They tended to stand outside society and think in terms of eons and cosmic cycles, adhering to a code of values so rigorous that the attainment of perfection could only culminate in death. Sentimentality, fatality and the death-wish are also the driving forces in Adam's life but no longer can this iron dreamer enact his role in the forefront of action. The world has shrunk and the imperial frontiers been tamed. The kind of resourcefulness and creative effort reserved for creating a new country or opening up 'savage' areas of the world no longer being available, the intensely individualistic quest of the dreamer has to find an outlet where his peculiar talents can be utilized to the maximum effect. The kind of freedom of action which is available in liminal situations which formerly could be found in frontier areas where law and lawlessness were hanging in a precarious balance, for Adam is found in operating underground.

To give him this freedom and remove all the possible constraints of the everyday world, Adam's martyrdom has to be exhaustive and remove any possibility of his resurfacing to the daylight world. To this end all his links with his former life have to be broken and future hope denied. This is symbolically done by removing from the scene his heir and offspring Nigel who is allowed to die at the age of five so that he could be his father's guiding spirit and guardian. Sexual love is denied until the very end when it is momentarily needed to make the quest for the wholeness of the soul complete but even then it is purely spiritual and remains unacted upon.

Adam's quest from the start is headed for death as a reward well earned after heavy toil. This is symbolized by the island Eilean Bàn, the equivalent of the mythical island(s) of the west of the Celtic and Greek legends and their chivalric equivalent Avalon. Eilean Bàn is Adam's ancestral home and the retreat of his boyhood summers. In his grown-up life it becomes the symbol of exile/banishment for his class from their ancestral estates (it is let to a Glasgow merchant), their former socio-political role (Adam's 'disgrace') and from his own boyhood happiness. It becomes the residence of his own aborted future in the form of Nigel who in his waking dreams roams the island and is waiting for him to join him. The true reality of Eilean Bàn is only available in a dreamy trance itself reminiscent of the favourite device of the romantic poets for accessing truer reality than met the eye and especially Tennyson when writing his *Idylls*.

As this is a quest for making one's soul, its most important component is Calvinism. This is not unduly foregrounded, except in the crucial scene when Adam achieves his understanding with God. Pondering on ways of conduct when the old chivalrous ones have been discredited, Adam returns to his ancestral religion:

Adam had the underlying fatalism which is the bequest of ancestral Calvinism, even though its specific tenets may have been long ago forgotten. He had always drawn comfort from the thought that, while it was a man's duty to strive to the uttermost, the result was determined by mightier things than man's will. He had believed most devoutly in God, though he would have been puzzled to define his creed. Suddenly there came over him a sense of the microscopic littleness and the gossamer fragility of human life. Everything lay in the hands of God, though men fussed and struggled and made a parade of freedom. Might not there be a more potent strength in utter surrender?

His mind became acid-clear. He had nothing – nothing. His chances in life, so zealously cherished, had departed like smoke. His reputation was shattered for ever. He had sunk into the underworld of those who are eternally discounted But if he was stripped to the bone, that meant also that he had nothing to lose – nothing but Eilean Bàn, which was not really of this world. But had he nothing left? He had health, and an exercised body – brains – much knowledge. Was there no use to be made of these even in the underworld of the disconsidered? Might there not be a tremendous power in complete submission? If soul and body were offered to God to plough under, might not there be a harvest from the sacrifice?

The thought came upon him with the force of revelation. His feebleness had suddenly become strength. He asked nothing of life, neither length of days, nor wealth, nor fame, nor comfort. He was out of the daylight and honour of the firing-line, but there must be work to do in dark places for one who was prepared to keep nothing back. Desperate men he had been told were always formidable, but desperation was commonly a wild neurotic thing, incalculable and undirected, based on ignoble passions like jealousy and fear. What of desperation which had in it no taint of self, which was passionless and reasoned, not wayward lightning but a steady flame? He might win the right to Eilean Bàn by other means than the glittering career he had once mapped out for himself.

A new kind of peace fell upon him. It was not the peace of the fakir who has renounced everything for the high road and the begging-bowl, but something more absolute still, for Adam did not ask for a hope of Heaven. Even Eilean Bàn dropped out of his picture. He was content to lay himself under the eternal plough... He took to prayer, which was a kind of communing with his own soul ... And finally there came a night when he dedicated himself humbly yet exultingly to whatever uttermost service might be asked, and rose from his knees with the certainty that his vow had been accepted. (PC 22–23)

The title of the book, as D. Daniell has shown, provides the best key to unlock the series of escapades and trials of strength that follow. He refers to the Jewish Scriptures, or the Christian Old Testament which relates how the Jews in their Babylonian exile chose 'Princes of the Captivity' to rule over them but since they were exiled from the proper holy ground of Jerusalem, their rule, though recognized and revered, was necessarily oblique. (1996: viii) Adam as a prince of the captivity can only work in the shadows, his service completely selfless and unrecognized, though he might wield real power. His personal modesty apart, the title has wider implications. As a representative of the class who has

been banished from power but is qualified to lead, his responsibility is to find a new leader who can take over. This will be Adam's worldly quest. His inner, spiritual one would be immortality if his service is undertaken in the true spirit of humility and dedication.

To achieve his quest, Adam the perfect knight first very properly enters into a rigorous period of training. This entails exercising all the faculties of the mind and body. These far exceed the capabilities of ordinary men but then Adam is a character of romance and an iron dreamer in such a context can achieve the impossible. In prison he masters all the bigger European languages, the geography and history of all countries and regions of the world, philosophy and higher mathematics. When he has completed his prison sentence, his first task is to get his body into such a state of fitness that can endure any extremes of fatigue or pain. Then it remains to combine the two training programmes so as to achieve a state of fortitude so perfect that his courage is like tempered steel and fortitude a habit of mind. The acquired skill should be tested in extreme conditions and these are furnished by the war. The dull stick-in-the mud business of the trenches would be a wasted effort for a mind and body as well-honed as his. In his humility he wants to enlist as a private but the War Office sends him behind enemy lines to build a spy network in Belgium. This would be a further lesson in humility and endurance, for he would have to give up the privileges and comforts of his class to work as a half-witted farm hand. But then the higher duty to which he had felt himself called since boyhood requires these kind of sacrifices. The oracle of God who impresses such truths on Adam is the mysterious Mr Scrope, a cross between a sage and a mystic and the modern equivalent of the hermit of the old romances. Here is a characteristic passage:

Duty was expounded as a thing both terrible and sweet, transcending life and death, a bridge over the abyss to immortality. But it required the service of all of man's being, and no half-gods must cumber its altar. /.../ 'He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall find it. /.../ That is not enough. /.../ He that findeth his soul shall lose it – that is the great commandment. You must be prepared to sacrifice much that you think honourable and of good report if you would fulfil the whole Law.' (PC 35)

His courage and resourcefulness as a spy are duly recognized by his former peers and he is reinstated in his former regiment and respectably decorated. The way would be open for him to return to his former life should he so wish. However, Adam feels that his training is not complete. A series of challenges, trials of manhood, tests of courage and endurance follow which give bulk to the book and its thriller content.

His training over, Adam embarks on his mission of finding the leader who would heal the broken spirit of the world. It is blindingly obvious to all who meet him that he is the born leader who is more than eminently qualified for the role but he insists on being king-maker rather than king. Interestingly, this being a genre inspired by the Middle Ages and Adam belonging to a class which

established the three-tiered hierarchical society that endured until the advent of the middle class, he thinks in terms of that particular epoch when he goes about looking for possible leaders. If we examine the class affiliation of his candidates Mr Utlaw the labour leader, Mr Alban the churchman and Lord Warmestre the aristocrat, we see that they neatly represent those who work, those who pray and those who fight. However, as feudalism and hierarchy conclusively perished in the fields of Flanders, these three classes are manifestly unable to provide future leaders. So Adam has to settle for the fourth class, the detested deal-makers.

From the chivalric point of view this is the worst choice, for there can be no nobility in the naked self-serving greed of the trading and speculating class. This is made abundantly clear by the repulsive personality of Adam's final, and forced, choice – Mr Creevey. From their first meeting they are declared enemies and it has been Creevey who has ruined Adam's two carefully nurtured candidates – the worker and the churchman. He has bought their allegiance by offering them creature comforts. The third candidate – the aristocrat – has noticeably not fallen into his net but falls victim to the pleas of his wife for which the aristocratic lady will make proper amends by offering her own allegiance (and heart) to the hero in crisis. They are dead opposites – Adam who has dedicated his body and soul to the service of God and fellow men and Creevey the self-indulgent sophist and materialist who preaches extreme egoism. While Adam seeks to build, Creevey seeks to destroy. While Adam fights for tradition, Creevey for the disintegration of tradition, for in the flux and chaos money can be made. Money-making in Creevey's chief talent and if Adam has a one-track mind, so has Creevey. If Adam is the implied spiritual leader the world needs but does not get, then Creevey is the financial leader the world has already got but he does not put his genius to its proper use. He needs a little education in humanist values to round off his character and Adam takes upon himself the task of instilling in this most unwilling philistine the proper idea of service. The well-known remedy of Buchan's aristocrats in such cases is to take the person to be reformed out of his habitual environment and put him through the rigorous regimen of the sportsman's training to open up the choked channels of virtue in the man. This Adam does by organizing a little plane crash in the Alps to get Creevey to himself and introduce him to mountaineering. However, this being a book of the disillusioned 1930s which is preoccupied with the rise of dictatorships in Europe and economic depression and disintegration at home, the successful completion of this mission is denied him. He can get Creevey only half-way through his programme of introducing him to the realities of bodily exertion and fellow sportsmanship before he is forced to sacrifice his own life. We would never know whether Creevey would measure up to the task entrusted to him by Adam and thus validate Adam's ultimate sacrifice. He is left tumbling down the hillside while Adam's lifelong training culminates in one supreme mental and bodily effort of dislodging a rock to cut off their pursuit. In retrospect, with a view to the war to come, it is of course

symbolic that Adam's final confrontation should be with fascist cutthroats to shield a man who embodies the financial alliance between England and the USA. But that is hindsight.

From Adam's own point of view his quest has been successful. He has submitted himself to the will of God, borne all hardships with a cheerful mind, spent his life in the service of others and in the process made his soul. He can retire to Eilean Bàn to enjoy his earned rest in the company of his son.

Edward Leithen (*The Power-House, John Macnab, The Dancing Floor, The Gap in the Curtain, Sick Heart River*)

The chivalrous side of Edward Leithen, by common consent of all Buchan's characters most like his creator, reveals itself to the reader only gradually. We first meet him in 1913 in the rather sketchy thriller *The Power-House* where he is an MP busy at the Bar and describes himself as a placid sedentary soul. Reticent about his inner life, he volunteers that there has only ever been one woman to capture his "stony heart" (PH 10) who had married another and that he is generally "a very dry creature, who loves facts and logic" (PH 33). No "flier" (ibid.) with a gift or wish to inspire other men, he is "a lover of a quiet life, with no appetite for perils and commotions" (PH 53). In the book he defeats a gang of international criminals led by an evil genius called Lumley, a forerunner of Buchan's later villains of Luciferian grandeur. He is roused to adventure by sheer obstinacy, for, like a true graduate of the public school system, he hates bullies worst of all. In *The Three Hostages* we learn that he has risen to the post of the Attorney-General and as such he appears in *John Macnab* which is Buchan's holiday book par excellence, describing the escapades of three distinguished men of affairs to alleviate the disillusion with their careers and hobbies brought on by the onset of the middle age.

Leithen as a character really comes into its own in *The Dancing Floor*. As with many another Buchan character, his reserved outward aspect is revealed as concealing an ardently romantic soul. Romance comes into his rather sterile life with a vengeance and turns the dry lawyer into a most unlikely knight errant.

It all starts with Vernon Milburne's irrational dream. Through shared confidences Leithen becomes the lonely boy's companion and, though nearing forty, is able to recapture some of the spirit of youth, always a treasured trait in any Buchan character. But with reawakened youth come youthful passions and Leithen finds himself suddenly in love. The man whom we had so far known as a level-headed collector of antiquities in a small way, is swept off his feet by what at first glance seems vulgar exoticism. The first inkling that there might be hidden depths to Leithen's soul is given to us during Vernon's and Leithen's joint boat trip to the Aegean just before the war. They unknowingly land on Plakos, the scene of their joint heroic rescue of Koré Arabin later in the book

which has figured in Vernon's dreams. The latter, a classical scholar and predestined lover of Koré, seems oblivious to the dark undercurrents present in the idyllic pastoral scene but Leithen is disturbed by "the spell of a very ancient and simple world" (DF 28). His "sluggish fancy" (DF 30) is suddenly stirred and he becomes aware of a silent menace posed by the mysterious white mansion which commands the harbour, as it turns out later, Koré's home.

The war intervenes and we learn of Leithen's distinguished war record. As befits a gentleman, he is reticent about his exploits, but the names of the battles in which he fought tell their own story. Though he is beyond the statutory limit for service, he volunteers and is in France already by October 1914. He is wounded in action at Fesubert, Loos, Ginchy, Third Ypres, Cambrai and Bapaume – major battles all, showing Leithen as having soldiered in the trenches of the Western Front all the four years of the war. In September 1918 he is gassed, the resultant tuberculosis taking him to Canada two decades later in *Sick Heart River*.

The camaraderie of the front has intensified his illusory identification with youth and as his friendship with Vernon cools, he falls under the spell of Koré Arabin. Having "always preferred Artemis to Aphrodite" (DF 51), he is more than ready to perceive in the rather vulgar and opinionated modern girl the virginal huntress rather than "the man-eating shark" (DF 56) she appears to be. The way he thinks of Koré reveals Leithen as a profoundly romantic dreamer whose imagination is firmly, and predictably, considering his age, shaped by the conventions of Victorian chivalry. Her casts her as a tragic heroine in armour whose frivolity is only a mask to hide "a tormented soul" (DF 85), her brash manners a camouflage for "a code of honour as fine and hard as steel" (ibid.). Likewise we find the incorruptible virgin-*femme fatale* dichotomy, and a keen sense of the romance of history, in the reasoning with which he tries to cope with her undeniable sexual allure:

I once read in some book about Cleopatra that that astonishing lady owed her charm to the fact that she was the last of an ancient and disreputable line. The writer cited other cases – Mary Queen of Scots, I think, was one. It seemed, he said, that the quality of high-coloured ancestors flowered in the ultimate child of the race into something like witchcraft. Whether they were good or evil, they laid a spell on men's hearts. Their position, fragile and forlorn, without the wardenship of male kinsfolk, set them on a romantic pinnacle. They were more feminine and capricious than other women, but they seemed, like Viola, to be all the brothers as well as all the daughters of their father's house, for their soft grace covered steel and fire. They were the true sorceresses of history, said my author, and sober men, not knowing why, followed blindly in their service. (DF 87)

His protective instinct is aroused and, as is typical of Buchan's heroes elsewhere, he reduces the woman to a helpless and innocent child to arrive at a comfortable for him level of intercourse. Her bad manners and arrogance can then be viewed with the equanimity of an indulgent parent, amusing rather than

threatening. Having cast himself as a father figure and Koré as a rude and petulant but docile child waiting for his orders, he finds it difficult to approach her as a prospective husband. Instead, he prefers to think of himself as her champion and as such makes his way to Plakos to protect her in her misguided attempt to win back her people.

A self-proclaimed indifferent Christian, he had not taken seriously Vernon's firm Calvinist belief in predestination. A revelation is in store for him and of a quite different kind from what he had hoped. While Vernon is guided to the island in a storm unawares and in the shelter of a fog is taken to Koré's house unobserved, the same fog foils Leithen's attempt at a secret landing and he is resolutely and conclusively barred from entering the premises by forces clearly determined to keep him out of the drama being enacted in the house. Instead, Fate directs him to seek shelter with the local priest and redefines his quest from that of a knight errant rescuing a maiden in distress to that of "a crusader going into peril in a strife with heathenish evil" (DF 115). Though the pagan attractions of the Dancing Floor, the quintessential Buchan *temenos*, prove almost irresistible, its evil side drives him back to the church in panic and we see enacted a conversion to faith very similar to the one Leithen is to go through once again, even more intensely, in *Sick Heart River*. The little Greek Orthodox church on the island is small and nondescript but it harbours a powerful force able to withstand the dark mysteries of Natura Benigna and Maligna. The rudely carved wooden figure of risen Christ laid out at the altar steps for the ceremony of Easter Resurrection brings on an epiphanic moment:

That sight worked a miracle with me. I suddenly felt that I was not alone, but had august allies. The Faith was behind me /.../ The shabby church, the mazed and ignorant priest took on suddenly a tremendous significance. ... They were the visible sign and warrant of that creed which we all hold dumbly, even those who call themselves unbelievers – the belief in the ultimate omnipotence of purity and meekness. (DF 125)

Like some Israelitish prophet, a comparison frequently evoked by Buchan elsewhere, Leithen has to contend with the forbidden attractions in his own soul to testify for his new-found faith, as he witnesses the ancient fertility rite enacted on the Dancing Floor:

I wish to Heaven that I had the gift of words. It is too much to ask a man whose life had been spent in drawing pleadings and in writing dull legal opinions to describe a scene which needs the tongue or pen of a poet. For the Dancing Floor was transfigured. Its lonely beauty had been decked and adorned, as an altar is draped for high festival. /.../ The place was no more the Valley of the Shadow of Life, but Life itself – a surge of dæmonic energy out of the deeps of the past. It was wild and yet ordered, savage and yet sacramental, the home of an ancient knowledge which shattered for me the modern world and left me gasping like a cave-man before his mysteries. The magic smote on my brain, though I struggled against it. The passionless moonlight and the passionate torches – that, I think,

was the final miracle – a marrying of the eternal cycle of nature with the fantasies of man. /.../ Most people would call me a solid fellow, with a hard head and a close-textured mind, but if they had seen me then they would have changed their views. I was struggling with something which I had never known before, a mixture of fear, abasement, and a crazy desire to worship. Yes – to worship. There was that in the scene which wakened some ancient instinct, so that I felt it in me to join the votaries.

It took me a little time to pull myself together. I looked up at the dome of the sky, where on the horizon pale stars were showing. The whole world seemed hard and gem-like and unrelenting. There was no help there. Nature approved this ritual. And then a picture flashed into my mind which enabled me to recover my wits. It was the carved Christ lying in its shroud on the bier in the deserted church. I am not a religious man in the ordinary sense – only a half-believer in the creed in which I was born. But in that moment I realized that there was that in me which was stronger than the pagan, an instinct which had come down to me from believing generations. I understood then what were my gods. I think I prayed. I know that I clung to the memory of that rude image as a Christian martyr may have clung to his crucifix. It stood for all the broken lights which were in me as against this ancient charmed darkness. (DF 144–145)

Leithen may be debarred from contributing to the rites of passage of Vernon and Koré as they find each other and challenge the islanders by appearing to them as their risen ancient deities. Yet he offers a challenge of his own, not less in significance though played to no human audience. As a proof of his faith he takes part in the religious procession through the streets of the deserted village carrying the image of Christ and has the satisfaction of hearing the bells of the church triumphant when they sail away.

It actually befalls to Leithen to enact and achieve the ultimate quest in chivalric and Christian terms – coming face to face with God. Buchan was a Platonist and his last completed novel, *Sick Heart River*, might be said to trace the soul's journey back to its original source in Platonic terms. Leithen the Calvinist also makes his own soul in the process, his journey of self-discovery being crowned by the beatific vision. His quest has also implicit parallels with the Grail Quest, not unexpected, considering the objective of his spiritual journey.

The book starts with the dispersal of the Round Table of Buchan's favourite characters of his 'shockers' already complained about by Sandy in *The Courts of the Morning* but now there is a finality about it which makes any return to the former camaraderie impossible. Leithen is diagnosed with a lethal disease and he decisively cuts all his earthly ties to go into the wilderness to make his soul. An indifferent Calvinist and a stoic, he feels he has to earn conditional immortality by subjecting his body – his last and rapidly deteriorating possession – to its ultimate test of endurance. His feats of endurance and fortitude are not unlike those of the Grail knights as they searched for the objective of their quest in difficult and hostile terrain, learning true Christian

humility in the process. And even the Ruined Chapel is there at the end of his journey where mass is enacted and he attains his heavenly reward.

It is also telling that when weighing the merits of different locations for his quest in his mind, Leithen rejects those which are associated with worldly pleasure and success. His childhood haunts in Scotland, his domiciles in England, his favourite holiday destinations, all are tainted with recollections of physical vigour and associations with his brilliant career as a barrister and Member of Parliament. To pitch his soul in a struggle against the elements to earn immortality he feels he needs a rougher environment, a real wilderness yet unspoilt by man. This leaves recollections of a paradisaical holiday in pastoral Canada when he was poor and only starting out as a lawyer. A fortuitous coincidence offers him a chance to visit again Clairefontain in Quebec, the ostensible mission of his trip being to search for a Canadian businessman who has gone into the wilderness and not returned. Following him into the Arctic seems to Leithen a good way to die in peace, away from the bustle and noise of the world of the living. He goes in search of a mausoleum but finds a challenge.

The book is charged with symbolism on many levels. Clairefontain, which is the classical Buchan *temenos*, is a clear spring in an Edenic valley to which it gives its name. It is a watershed, a stream running from it south to join St Lawrence and another north into the Arctic Ocean. It is a frontier between the wilderness and the sown, the homely civilization of the south and the harsh wilderness of the north which is inimical to human habitation, or so Leithen initially thinks. It is a watershed in his own life and in the life of Francis Galliard who is his mirror image and whose role in the book is to highlight the similarities between their conditions and Leithen's particular strengths. For childless Leithen Galliard who has chosen him as his mentor carries on the torch, so to speak, when Leithen's physical existence has ceased and is a continuing physical embodiment of the ideals Leithen found confirmed by his quest. Significantly, Galliard was born at Clairefontain, being its lawful guardian and keeper, his claim going back to the first opening up of the Laurentians by Champlain and his followers. The seigneurie of Chateau-Galliard is the oldest in the land but Galliard's stock goes further back still, to the very Crusades, which gives his character an additional dimension and leads to very tempting speculations. These are nowhere explicitly developed in the book but nevertheless are very suggestive for a student of chivalry. In the context of Leithen's quest, and Galliard's own, Clairefontain is a sanctuary and a watchtower, a favourite Buchan combination calling for deeds of valour and offering repose after work done. Now it is very tempting to read into it some Grail symbolism, the more so because it is in the book also very obviously the fountain of youth and eternal life. Leithen and Galliard are both looking for their roots and in the process of rediscovering them also rediscover their religion, Catholicism and Calvinism respectively, but in both cases it is emphatically not the formal observance of the rituals that concerns them.

Leithen especially refuses until the end to tie himself to any formal structure of the church, preferring communion with God unhindered by any intrusion from self-appointed authorities. He attains grace, as is explicitly confirmed by the catholic priest who ministers to him when the end comes, but his faith is of the instinctive and personal kind that does not really need the sanction of official dogma. Now for the aficionado of Grail romances there is food for thought here. It is well known that the Grail cycle and the notion of the Grail itself developed with no approval of the church. Rather, the peculiar religiosity of the secular Grail romances which barely acknowledged the presence of priests and enacted its ceremonies in secular surroundings with an ostensibly direct sanction from Christ himself was seen as subversive and at best to be ignored. The mythical keepers of the Grail in their mountain residence offered an alternative spirituality where the ministrations of the church were seen as irrelevant. Now coming to Clairefontain, which is a cup in the hills but is also a watchtower that commands the prospect of the whole world, so to say, the symbolism is hard to overlook. This is not to argue that Buchan used the Grail parallels deliberately or even consciously, but to point to the possibility of seeing parallels in the book with material which had shaped the self-perception of his own and two previous generations. It is indeed very tempting to read into the trusteeship and guardianship of Clairefontain some Grail-keeping symbolism, successive generations of chosen guardians qualifying through their quests to the right to guard the clear spring from which flows eternal life. In this context it is highly significant that Leithen, at the end of his quest, should be buried there and Galliard reclaim it as his base from which to venture out into the world on missions of valour and enterprise but always returning to it for spiritual nourishment like the Grail knights of old.

Those knights who went into the wilderness in search of the Grail were debarred from seeing it through their sinfulness. Tennyson especially in his *Idylls* condemned their self-seeking egotism and thus shaped the nineteenth-century interpretation of their quests. Interestingly, what we see happening to Leithen on his quest, is a similar kind of erosion of the remains of egotism and the thawing of his heart. Through suffering bodily torment (at one point actually referred to as his *purgatory*) he as if makes atonement for the former pampering of his body and glorying in his mortal strength. He also discovers the meaning of true Christian humility and through it the way to attaining grace.

When Leithen starts out on his journey he describes his kind of courage as at best “a thin stoicism” or rather “a shallow fortitude” (SHR 3). He is not afraid of death but he has neither been passionately in love with life. For fellow men he has “no undue reverence” (*ibid.*), they not having been important enough in his Calvinist scheme of things which had relegated all mortals to a place of insignificance in the face of the grandeur of God. He does not want to die in his bed but wants to go down “in action with all flags flying” (SHR 15) and regrets that there is no war on where he could test his manhood and die standing. He

imagines his quest into the Arctic as a gradual but stoic wasting away until his breath is released from the body in a magnificently sublime setting of ice and snow, the true landscape of death. This is passive courage but he has yet to find his faith and true work. It is significant that the question of religion is first raised when he reaches Clairefontain in pursuit of Galliard. He first perceives it as a delectable sanctuary where to die but, Clairefontain being also a watchtower, it is a summons to action. In his own way Leithen, too, is an iron dreamer who has to earn his right to rest and sanctuary by active deeds. His mission is nothing less than conquering Death. Death for Christians was conquered by a loving sacrifice and we see Leithen enacting a similar sacrifice, making a generous gift of his life to conquer the hostility of the North with an act of love.

Though he does not know it, the Arctic, far from being his resting-place, is going to be his battle-field. He has expected grandeur and majesty to better perceive the nearness of God but is to be sorely disappointed. When he and his guide reach the Ghost River delta, having entered the true Arctic, he is confronted with a landscape which he significantly likens to that scene of carnage on an unimaginable scale – the No-Man’s-Land of the Great War. And yet it is a landscape teeming with life:

Leithen had never imagined such an abomination of desolation. It was utterly silent, and the only colours were sickly greens and drabs. At first sight he thought he was looking down on a bit of provincial Surrey, broad tarmac roads lined with asphalt footpaths, and behind the trim hedges smooth suburban lawns. It took a little time to realise that the highways were channels of thick mud, and the lawns bottomless quagmires. He was now well inside the Circle, and had expected from the Arctic something cold, hard, and bleak, but also clean and tonic. Instead he found a horrid lushness – an infinity of mire and coarse vegetation, and a superfluity of obscene insect life. The place was one huge muskeg. It was like the no-man’s-land between the trenches in the War – a colossal no-man’s-land created in some campaign of demons, pitted and pocketed with shell-holes from some infernal artillery.

They skirted the delta and came down at its western horn on the edge of the sea. Here there was no mist, and he could look far into the North over still waters eerily lit by the thin evening sunlight. It was like no ocean he had ever seen, for it seemed to be without form or reason. The tide licked the shore without purpose. It was simply water filling a void, a treacherous, deathly waste, pale like a snake’s belly, a thing beyond humanity and beyond time. Delta and sea looked as if here the Demiurg had let His creative vigour slacken and ebb into nothingness. He had wearied of the world which He had made and left this end of it to ancient Chaos. /.../ This was a world not built on the human scale, a world made without thought of mankind, a world colourless and formless, but also timeless; a kind of eternity. It would be a good place to die in, he thought, for already the clinging ties of life were loosened and death would mean little since life had ceased. (SHR 56–57)

The great irony is that far from being a place of death, this is a place of life and there being no germs in the Arctic, it is one huge sanatorium which will cure his disease. However, to be cured, he has to open his soul to receive grace. For this he has to open his heart to love and perceive God's grandeur not only in magnificent landscapes but in his fellow mortals. A crucial remark at this stage is made by Father Duplessis, a catholic missionary priest, who to Leithen's question as to whether he ever feels crushed by the vastness around him, replies:

'No,' was the answer, 'for I live in a little world. I am always busy among little things. I skin a moose, or build a boat, or hammer a house together, or treat a patient, or cobble my boots or patch my coat – all little things. And then I have the offices of the Church, in a blessedly small place, for our chapel is a midget.' 'But outside all that?' said Leithen, 'you have an empty world and an empty sky.' 'Not empty,' said Father Duplessis, smiling, 'for it is filled with God.' (SHR 68–69)

The Americanized Galliard has come to the Arctic to find his French Canadian roots, his ancestors having been pioneers and explorers. When leaving for the USA he had made a clean break with the past and had lived a non-committal life purged of tradition and individuality. Leithen the Anglicized Scot who has led a similarly non-committed life returns to his roots through his guide Johnny Frizel, a half-breed (or *métis*) born of a Cree Indian mother and a Scottish father who hails from the same region as Leithen himself in the Scottish Borders. Taking an interest in a fellow creature who by the standards of the times was definitely considered inferior to white men, though the *métis* were a degree above Indians proper who were seen as a dying and degenerate race, marks Leithen's first step on the road to true Christian charity and the rightness of it is signalled by his improved health. But he still has a long way to go and the extent to which he is still clinging to his ego is shown by his initial reaction when reaching the encampment of the Hare Indians. He is especially put off by their Christian chapel:

The place stank foully, and when they landed Leithen felt nausea stealing over him. /.../ The priest opened the door which communicated with the chapel, lit two tapers on the altar, and displayed with pride a riot of barbaric colours. The walls were hung with cloths painted in bedlamite scarlets and purples and oranges – not the rude figures of men and animals common on the teepees, but a geometrical nightmare of interwoven cubes and circles. The altar cloth had the same Byzantine exuberance.

'That is the work of our poor people,' said the priest. 'Helped by Brother Onesime, who had the artist's soul. To you, monsieur, it may seem too gaudy, but to our Indians it is a foretaste of the New Jerusalem.' (SHR 74)

Not ready yet, he does not recognize the chapel for what it is but its significance is underlined by Leithen's harshest self-evaluation yet when he comes to question the very purpose of his life:

What had he to do with the aberrations of American financiers and the whims of half-breeds? Somewhere in those bleak hills he would die – a poor ending for a not undignified life! ... But had his life been much of a thing after all? He had won a certain amount of repute and made a certain amount of money, but neither had meant much to him. He had had no wife, no child. Had his many friends been more, after all, than companions? In the retrospect his career seemed lonely, self-centred, and barren, and what was this last venture. A piece of dull stoicism at the best – or, more likely, a cheap bravado. (SHR 72)

He is irritated by being denied dignity and grandeur associated with the grand finale of one's life well lived:

Leithen sat in the presbytery in a black depression. The smells of the encampment – unclean human flesh, half-dressed skins of animals, gobbets of putrefying food – were bad enough in that mild autumn noon. /.../ But the real trouble was that suddenly everything seemed to have become little and common. The mountains were shapeless, mere unfinished bits of earth; the forest of pine and spruce had neither form nor colour; the river, choked with logs and jetsam, had none of the beauty of running water. In coming into the wilderness he had found not the majesty of Nature, but the trivial, the infinitely small – an illiterate half-breed, a rabble of degenerate Indians, a priest with the mind of a child. The pettiness culminated in the chapel, which was as garish as a Noah's Ark from a cheap toyshop. ... He felt sick in mind and very sick in body. (SHR 74–75)

During the journey further north Leithen exists as if in limbo – “in a state which was neither ease nor mal-ease” (SHR 83) – but the scale is tipped in favour of his recovery the moment he forgets his own depression to take care of another human being. He finds Galliard sick in body and mind and has to nurse him back to health. To do that he has to go and find Galliard's crazed guide Lew who has gone off on his own spiritual quest to find the Sick Heart River. Both men have become deranged by the fear of the North which is none other than the fear of death brought on by the realization of one's insignificance vis-à-vis the seemingly hostile universe.

The Sick Heart River is a mystical place which lures men who have not made peace with their souls. It has many manifestations depending on the nature of the craving which it is to assuage. To Leithen the passionate fisherman it presents itself as a delectable Highland salmon river, a perfect pastoral. He is nearing his end and has completely submitted to his fate, likening himself to Job who has bowed his head before God's will in utter humility. But he has misread God's will and mistaken the nature of the valley. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is never very far from Buchan's characters and readily furnishes parallels for delusions that lure the Christian pilgrim on his way. Sick Heart River with its promise of proliferation of life is none other than the Valley of the Shadow of

Death, a cursed place at the mouth of Hell. Leithen who desires to lay his bones in this what appears to him a magnificent shrine, thinking his questing is done, has to reconsider both his destination and quest. He has also to reconsider the nature of his religion.

His creed “had remained something aloof from his life” (SHR 113). He has felt insignificant before God’s majesty, “an atom in infinite space, the humblest of slaves waiting on the command of an august master” (SHR 114). The inhuman scale of the North has intensified his abjectness. Significantly it is Lew who shatters his illusion of having attained his quest and by his helplessness sets Leithen on a course of finding what we may call the true Grail Chapel. Being part Indian and part white, he as if serves as a link between the two worlds and paves the way for Leithen to perceiving his true duty and work. Helping Lew, who is no mountaineer, out of the valley of death and being in turn cured by him, reconnects him with humanity and erodes his aloof indifference to his fellow mortals. Significant also are his war memories which come and go at the crucial stages of his journey, leading him to a choice we have come to expect from a Buchan hero. Belief in God’s omnipresence and omnipotence having been the buttresses of Leithen’s unquestioning faith, he has nevertheless not experienced communion with him, the only exception being the war years, when he had felt “a relation so close as to be almost communion – that he was not only under God’s ultimate command, but under his direct care” (SHR 113). Now that he again has to overcome his egotism to assume responsibility for the welfare of other men, the channels choked by years of “spiritual sloth” (ibid.) are opened and he experiences a revelation:

He had welcomed the North because it matched his dull stoicism. Here in this iron and icy world man was a pigmy and God was all in all. Like Job, he was abashed by the divine majesty and could put his face in the dust. /.../ He lay passive in all-potent hands.

Now there suddenly broke in on him like a sunrise a sense of God’s mercy – deeper than the fore-ordination of things, like a great mercifulness. ... Out of the cruel North most of the birds had flown south from ancient instinct, and would return to keep the wheel of life moving. Merciful! But some remained, snatching safety by cunning ways from the winter of death. Merciful! Under the fetters of ice and snow there were little animals lying snug in holes, and fish under the frozen streams, and bears asleep in the lie-ups, and moose stamping out their yards, and caribou rooting for their grey moss. Merciful! And human beings, men, women, and children, fending off winter and sustaining life by an instinct old as that of the migrating birds. /.../ Surely, surely, behind the reign of law and the coercion of power there was a deep purpose of mercy.

The thought induced in Leithen a tenderness to which he had been long a stranger. He had put life away from him, and it had come back to him in a final reconciliation. He had always hoped to die in April weather when the surge of returning life would be a kind of earnest of immortality. Now, when presently death came to him, it would be like dying in spring. (SHR 113–114)

Wintering with Galliard and the métis brothers in the Arctic has “made him warm towards common humanity” (SHR 158) but this warmth does not yet include the Indians. For that he needs a clarion call and it comes from Father Duplessis who is stationed in the Hare Indian camp that had turned his stomach in autumn. It takes the form of a plea for help from one former soldier to another and finally defines Leithen’s quest for him.

The Hare Indians are dying from the complaint of which he is almost cured – tuberculosis and depression. They are the humblest of creatures, likened even by the priest to the unredeemed beasts of the field and initially Leithen is outraged by the idea that he is asked to exchange his chance of complete recovery for what he sees as a trivial cause – “the *malaise* of human kites and crows roosting at the end of the earth” (SHR 166). He feels that his own battle is grim enough without having to spend his meagre strength on something so undeserving. News of war in Europe which rules out his return to his former life and the enormity of the challenge posed by Death to the whole world makes him reconsider and henceforth his quest becomes that of a true soldier of Christ, the God of the Living. Father Duplessis’s church bell is a bugle call summoning to action and it calls into a battle that has now acquired cosmic dimensions:

That tinny bell had an explosive effect on Leithen’s mind. This was a place of death, the whole world was full of death – and yet there was one man who stood stubbornly for life. He rang the bell which should have started his flock on their day’s work. Sunk in weakness and despair they would remain torpid, but he had sounded the challenge. Here was one man at any rate who was the champion of life against death. /.../ The world was at war again. It might be the twilight of the gods, the end of all things. The globe might swim in blood. Death might resume his ancient reign. But, by Heavens, he would strike his blow for life, even a pitiful flicker of it. (SHR 182–183)

Having found his duty, he also discovers his roots and the meaning of his sojourn in the wilderness. He has conquered his fear of death – the “pestilence of the soul” (SHR 185) from which Galliard and the Hare Indians still suffer – by having experience God’s love for all creation while at death’s door. It now remains to extend his new-found charity to others in need who have no such assurance. Fighting death with love and offering up his life in the struggle like a precious gift from one man to others so that life may continue would be the meaning of active courage for a soldier who is doing God’s work. This would be beyond the Indians or even the half-breeds, for they have not been raised in the culture which is firmly rooted in Christian *caritas* and the chivalric ethos that had grown out of it. It is accessible to the white men, Father Duplessis having discovered it through his religious vocation and Leithen, and through him Galliard, in their confrontation with the North. The North offers a perennial challenge. The half-breeds meet it with deviousness and cunning, striking an honourable bargain with death. The Indians trust to luck and live on sufferance, in danger of being swept away any moment. But men who bravely accept the

challenge and confront death by countering it with love need not fear. Though they might lose their life in the process, their reward is not of this world. Leithen's last exultant realization of what love means is also a hymn to human endeavour and the most fully expounded version of the creed which shines forth in all of Buchan's books, so fittingly to be found at the end of his last novel which turned out to be his literary testament:

He had thought of himself like Job, as one whose strength lay only in humbleness. He had been crushed and awed by God.

A barren creed! He saw that now, for its foundation had been pride of defiance, keeping a stiff neck under the blows of fate. He had been abject but without true humility. /.../ The North had not frozen him, but had melted the ice in his heart. God was not only all-mighty but all-loving. His old happiness seemed to link in with his new mood of thankfulness. The stream of life which had flown so pleasantly had eternity in its waters. He felt himself safe in the hands of a power that was both God and friend.

He had been inhuman, Leithen told himself, with the dreary fortitude of a sick animal. Now whatever befell him he was once again in love with his fellows. The cold infernal North magnified instead of dwarfing humanity. What a marvel was this clot of vivified dust! ... The universe seemed to spread itself before him in immense distances lit and dominated by a divine spark which was man. An inconsiderable planet, a speck in the infinite stellar spaces; most of it salt water; the hulk of the land rock and desert and austral and boreal ice; interspersed mud, the detritus of æons, with a thin coverlet of grass and trees – that vegetable world on which every living thing was in the last resort a parasite! Man, precariously perched on this rotating scrap-heap, yet so much master of it that he could mould it to his transient uses, while struggling to live, could entertain thoughts and dreams beyond the bounds of time and space! Man so weak and yet so great, the chief handiwork of the Power that had hung the stars in the firmament!

He was moved to a strange exaltation. Behind his new access of strength he felt the brittleness of his body. His stock of vigour was slender indeed, but he could spend it bravely in making his soul. Most men had their lives taken from them. It was his privilege to *give* his, to offer it freely and joyfully in one last effort of manhood. The North had been his friend, for it had enabled him, like Jacob, to wrestle with the dark angel and extort a blessing. /.../

In making his soul he would also give back Galliard his. He would win the world too, for now the great, shining, mystic universe above him was no longer a foe but a friend, part with himself of an eternal plan. (SHR 193–194)

He cures the Indians by embracing them with the warmth of his love. He adopts them as his family and clan, finding his Grail in their humble chapel and passes out of this world with a firm assurance of eternal life.

CONCLUSION

The present thesis set as its aim to study the idea of chivalry as manifest in the behaviour and choices of Buchan's male heroes. To root the analysis firmly in the historical context, Buchan's own class background was examined to ascertain his class position vis-à-vis the ideals his protagonists hold and his principles of writing his peculiar kind of romance were discussed in the introduction. In order to address the main theme, it was thought expedient to provide a survey of the evolution of the idea of chivalry through its many manifestations to clarify the terms and create a base for further reference. The more so because, to the knowledge of the present author, such a survey covering the thousand years of the development of the creed in such a format is not available, different periods being studied in depth by different authors but no overview being as yet published.

The main body of the thesis examines gentlemen born among Buchan's heroes, it being one of the parts of the bigger 'Buchan Project' which comprises four parts, including also gentlemen made, nature's gentlemen and villains and failures. For reasons of space these other parts could not be included in the thesis but to adhere to the original spirit and purpose of the analysis and to provide a balanced context for heroes examined in the thesis, the principal results of the bigger project can also be found below. The method used was close reading of Buchan's romances to identify chivalric elements in their structure and character building and discuss them in their historical context. This historical context was seen as vital and a viable line of enquiry, for quite a number of ideas, especially the ones related to chivalry, to be found in Buchan's fiction are no longer current and readily understood by the reader with no foreknowledge of what constituted the gentlemanly ethos in Buchan's day. The texts studied were Buchan's novels and the short stories where the chivalric element was pronounced and was developed in some depth. Chivalric themes in Buchan's works being implicit rather than explicit, to be inferred from the actions and motives of the heroes and villains, it was considered expedient to first identify them and then discuss them at some length to clarify them for the modern reader whose knowledge of the code that underlines them need no longer be as self-evident as in Buchan's day. Once established, Buchan's views changed relatively little, his being a balanced and conservative temperament. Thus we see no great change or dynamic in his views on chivalry in his works which cover almost half a century, his idealism and faith in man's inherent nobility remaining as strong at the end of his career as it had been at the beginning. Consequently not a chronological approach was chosen but a thematic one, grouping the characters according to their relationship to the chivalric code, the more so because the same characters could appear in several books or one book could contain several types of characters. Rather, what was examined was the manifestation of the idea of chivalry in its various different

guises and historically determined forms in Buchan's romances which themselves cover five hundred years.

It has been an age-old belief that true gentility is determined by the right sort of blood. Chivalry as a caste and estate reaffirmed this connection and claimed nobility through descent. A gentleman born was always a cut above gentlemen made, the aristocratic class claiming as their exclusive right and privilege the kind of selfless service of their state and community which they had defined for themselves when they had achieved territorial control and established their ascendancy over lesser classes. The mystique of the blood which sets one man above another and shapes for him a peculiar destiny is explored by Buchan in his collection of historical vignettes called *The Path of the King*. Proceeding from the premise that noble blood, passed on through generations, carries in it greatness which perforce must manifest itself at the appointed time, the book traces the fictional pedigree of Abraham Lincoln back to its source in Scandinavia in the Dark Ages and explores various forms of aristocratic service through the ages until its culmination in the Great Emancipator. The book was found to be firmly, and predictably, considering Buchan's conservative and romantic taste, rooted in the Victorian imperial historiography and to shed interesting light on some concepts current in Buchan's formative years but no longer cherished today. Different epochs are characterized by various kinds of essentially chivalric service, the complete picture tracing the evolution of what was then called 'the island race' and celebrating its achievement.

By tracing 'Anglo-Saxondom' back to Viking Scandinavia, Buchan is adhering to the then current imperial ethos which combined the Whig and Tory interpretations of the nation's history. The young Viking prince can be seen to embody the freedom-loving northern tribes who were ascribed by the Whig version of history the qualities which in later periods can be assigned labels like 'English', 'Protestant', 'democratic' and 'anti-Catholic'. The Tory emphasis on the Anglo-Norman heritage, with connotations of 'feudalism', 'hierarchy' and 'Anglicanism', is represented by the prince's descendant, a Norman knight, the embodiment of law and good government. When after 1066 he settles in England, the two strands in the national character – the 'solidity' of the Saxons and the 'spirit' of the Normans – both of Scandinavian origin, are combined and the union sanctioned by a reminder of the former Roman presence in the land, the ancient wayside altar establishing a link with Roman Britannia in what can be seen as a continuum of just government. Various forms of aristocratic service are represented. The Viking prince's father possesses qualities that were necessary for establishing territorial control in a period when leadership depended on exemplary personal qualities. His descendant Jehan the Norman knight is the embodiment of benevolent feudal rule brought to England by the Conquest. He stands for law and order, the qualities the English thought they uniquely possessed and which sanctified their imperial enterprise. This worldwide expansion is foreshadowed by the free-trading 'Wife of Flanders'

who can be seen to stand for, besides the medieval wool-trading connection with the continent, the Free Trade ideology which saw the imperial mission as basically enlightening and civilizing, transcending national limitations to facilitate the march of human progress to all corners of the globe. Sir Amery of Beaumanoir is the epitome of chivalric service, being a model knight and crusader. The central concern of the book – the nature of public service – in his case takes on the pronounced spiritual dimension culminating in his martyrdom for the True Faith, foreshadowing several similar sacrifices later in the book. While men must travel to the ends of the earth to seek salvation and their true work, women's service is different. Utilizing the favourite Victorian 'mailed virgin' Joan of Arc, Buchan reaffirms that their role is in the domestic sphere, motherhood being sanctified by the sacrifice of the Mother of God. Philip the Laval is the representative renaissance man whose pursuit of New Learning leads him to the brink of Protestantism. He is also an early explorer, making landfall in South Carolina. He stands on the brink of a new age, a forerunner of the evangelising and imperial mission which will shift the focus of the national enterprise across the Atlantic. For this purpose the Huguenot Gaspard de Laval is shown as symbolically cutting his continental ties on St Bartholomew's Night to join the Elizabethan 'sea dogs' operating on the Spanish Main. His grandson sails with Raleigh to Guiana, underscoring for the great captain his true achievement through the parable of the Hidden City. The founder of the colony of Virginia is shown to have left his country the legacy greater than any treasure of gold – a new land where his race can multiply and build a new Protestant nation. Buchan's Raleigh the visionary and political thinker also fits the contemporary mould of that of a proto-democrat, the nature of emerging democracy being examined in the next episode that deals with the Civil War. The regicide Nicholas Loval discourses on the merits and demerits of executing an anointed king, opting for privilege earned by merit. However, time is not yet ripe for meritocratic service, so his descendants follow their confused paths until they end up in America. Jim Lovelle is the archetypal hunter and pioneer who blazes a trail for his people into the unopened American West, a prophet who leads them to the promised land and a visionary who prophesies their future glory. He can be seen as forming a symbolic link between the savage darkness of the land and its imminent redemption by uniting in his person the classical heritage of the Old World and the bold individualism of the New. The sequence of vignettes culminates with the highlights of the life of Abraham Lincoln who is made to stand for ideal democratic service of the state which supplants the old aristocratic service based on prerogative and privilege.

Buchan's novels have been treated in the thesis as modern romances of knight errantry, the different yet similar quests of their protagonists highlighting various aspects of chivalry in its nineteenth-century form modified for contemporary needs by men like Tennyson. Tennyson's presence can be strongly felt in Buchan's first novel *Sir Quixote of the Moors*, the love triangle

of which and the hero's predicament bringing strongly to mind Tennyson's *Idylls* and especially the quandary of Lancelot. Jean, Sieur de Rohaine's symbolic quest into the moral waste land of worldliness to find regeneration through love and self-denial which closely mirrors the Tennysonian battle between Sense and Soul is projected onto the landscape which sublimely mirrors the mental and emotional states of the hero. Jean, a man of honour who has lost his bearings in the untrammelled riot of the senses, embarks on a journey to regain his lost virtue and in his directionless wanderings in the Scottish Borders stumbles upon a household of Covenanters. This seemingly virtuous household, like King Arthur's in the *Idylls*, is seen to harbour a temptress and Jean makes his soul in battling his senses in a love triangle where his host Master Henry can be seen as bearing a close resemblance to King Arthur in his moral high-mindedness and his betrothed Anne being ascribed the role of Guinevere. Jean's predicament closely mirrors Lancelot's when Anne's future husband takes to the hills to avoid capture and entrusts Anne to Jean's care. Bound by a pledge to protect his lover, Jean is put in a difficult position by a word of honour which he finds increasingly difficult to keep when he falls in love with Anne who under his guidance has awakened to sensual pleasure. Anne's innocent awakening to the joys of worldliness also brings to mind Tennyson's Elaine whose awakening desire for Lancelot made her want to break out of the bounds of her domestic sphere. The desecration of the domestic sphere by lust was the great crime of Guinevere and Jean fears a similar fate as Anne's growing sensuality undermines his resolve to stay chaste. Adultery, if only in the mind, being a mortal sin, would harm Jean's prospects of salvation and as a true Victorian soldier of Christ he fights heroically to withstand Anne/Guinevere's lure very much like Lancelot in his lonely struggle to control his lust, the Soul finally winning over Sense. Honour having been preserved, he leaves the 'fallen' Anne to her fate and rides off into the wilderness in great mental anguish.

The eponymous hero of *John Burnet of Barnes* achieves his quest similarly in the Scottish Borders of the 1680s but its accent is different. The hero is striving to strike the proper Aristotelian balance between the active and passive life, being at pains to establish his position as a moderate in religion and politics, foreshadowing similar concerns in later books where this position is already taken for granted. Interestingly, for a student of chivalry, John's oscillation between soldierly and civilian values in the context of the seventeenth century also highlights the changes in the perception of what constitutes true nobility, John's old-fashioned cousin and enemy Gilbert standing for the old moss-trooping kind of chivalry while John with his intellectual curiosity and love of learning can be seen to stand for the new refined sensibility of the gentleman virtuoso. The book has many incidents which can be seen as modern versions of events which befall the hero during the traditional chivalric quest of medieval romances of knight errantry and

seemingly serve no other function than providing occasions for chivalric display, furthering in their small way also the hero's quest for self-knowledge in the course of which he acquires all the necessary chivalric virtues to qualify as a true man of honour.

Francis Birkenshaw in *A Lost Lady of Old Years* embarks on his quest for self-knowledge not with the light-hearted confidence of a born aristocrat aware of his own potential and worth but under the shadow of illegitimacy and disgrace. The book can be read as a study of dormant virtue in a soul which has been corrupted by its environment yet undergoes a transformation when brought into contact with true nobility. Francis has aristocratic blood but it has been tainted by association with lower classes and he has sunk into vice. His moral regeneration is occasioned by falling in love with a truly aristocratic lady in whose service he learns the meaning of chivalry. This entails the resolute cutting of his ties with middle-class domesticity and a literal and symbolic journey into the wilderness to test his manhood. The year is 1745 and the dash and valour of Bonnie Prince Charlie's quixotic bid for power revives in Francis his ancestral spirit. He masters the heroic part of the chivalric code through his association with the controversial Lord Lovatt to whom he pledges himself in the spirit of feudal service. The amatory aspect of chivalry is represented by his brief association with Lady Murray who completes the reformation of his character by inspiring in Francis a love which in every aspect can be shown to be truly courtly. His complete reintegration into the aristocratic community is sealed by recognition from his peers – the aristocratic branch of his family who welcomes him back, Lord Lovatt who accords him the highest honour by asking him to assist him on the scaffold, thus having him share his last stand, and finally the Lord President of Scotland who has been following his halting progress and can finally pronounce him a very gallant gentleman indeed.

Modern gentlemen of the blood enter Buchan's oeuvre as 'iron dreamers' who fight their lonely battles, misunderstood and unappreciated but adhering to their peculiar code of honour. They can be seen as reflections of the rather troubled idea of manliness that was current in society and literature during the forty years before the Great War, having come into being as a response to anxieties related to the erosion of Britain's pre-eminence in the world. The imperial mythology with a strong dose of evangelical Calvinism called into being a hero who transcended the insecurities and vicissitudes of modern manhood to assume a cosmic dimension. These men, supremely secure in their mission, imperial or otherwise, think in aeons and cosmic cycles, shunning domesticity and worldly success in order to make their souls.

An early example is the protagonist of the short story 'A Captain of Salvation', a fallen aristocrat whose chivalrous struggle to rise from the depth of ignominy is modelled on the New Testament story of Christ's temptation by the Devil. As a standard-bearer of the Salvation Army he leads a crusade into the vice-infested slums of London's East End.

'Fountainblue' examines the case of a nobleman called Maitland who casts himself as an outcast and eternal wanderer in the Byronic mould, easily communing with nature but ill at ease in society. His case is an interesting one from the point of view of whether the middle-class work ethic can be integrated with the chivalric ideal of aristocratic behaviour. Maitland is a self-made man who has been forced to spend the years his peers idled away at public school and university working to earn his living and consequently lacks the kind of social graces which were seen to give a man his 'sportsmanlike' character. He is too earnest, too clever, too straightforward, too business-like – in short too middle class – to win the approval of the country house set and has to yield the woman he loves to a light-weight rival with the required social polish. However, his true mettle – and his rival's lack of it – is apparent in fighting the elements where his peculiar talents come into their own. True sportsmanship, as opposed to its light-hearted society version, is shown to reside in an ability to confront the fury of the elements head-on. Communion with nature is shown to give Maitland an omniscient perspective which by nullifying any human ambition makes him a model empire-builder. Maitland's crusade takes him to the unexplored frontiers of Empire where he carves out a colony by will-power alone and perishes in the attempt.

The self-sustained ethos of such imperial heroes had a darker side, the Victorian separation of the public and domestic sphere having stunted their emotional development by consigning all tender emotions to the feminized domestic sphere. Forcibly separated from what was seen as the pernicious influence of excessive femininity of the home, schooled in the hard masculine values in the exclusively male environments of the public school and university and then the army, the boys grew up into lonely, introverted individuals who tended to look for fulfilment and meaning to their lives not in the deeds and relationships of their maturity but in the dream-world of their own past. Trying to recapture the pure joy of living and sense of purpose of their boyhood, what they tended to find was sentimental fatalism and the death-wish. Buchan has a number of such heroes, an early version being Colin Raden in 'The Far Islands'. A motherless boy whose father is emotionally unavailable, Colin attends all the right schools, excels at required games, becomes a gentleman of polish and grace but is unable to relate to women though they pursue him. Opting to spend his life in the all-male environment of the army, he becomes a recluse whose life is ruled by a romantic dream of an island borrowed from his native Highland lore. Attaining the island of his dream, likened to the Hesperides of the Greek heroes and the Avalon of Arthur, becomes his single-minded quest to be achieved at the moment of death which characteristically comes to him in one of the little imperial wars.

Another lonely individual driven by a dream is Graves in 'No-Man's Land'. He retreats further into the past than his own childhood to recover for science the lost heritage of the Picts. The story's wider context is the fin-de-siècle

fascination with the uncanny and the eruption of the primitive, atavistic forces into the civilized everyday world, a concern which was to haunt Buchan throughout his life, his awareness of the brittleness of civilization being repeatedly voiced throughout his literary career. Graves the explorer of new scientific territory fights his battles on the frontier between civilization and savagery heroically and chivalrously and dies in the attempt to widen the horizon of human knowledge.

Lewis Haystoun, the hero of *The Half-Hearted* who unites in himself the iron dreamer, the eternal wanderer, the crusader, the explorer, the empire-builder and the modern courtly lover, tries to come to grips with the post-Third Reform Act erosion of paternalism by resorting to Carlyle's Chivalry of Work. The book examines the situation in the Scottish Borders through the eyes of the aristocratic protagonist and his friends who are baffled and disoriented by the invasion of the countryside by middle-class professional politicians and the failure of the middle classes to grasp the imperial ethos. The aristocratic code of service and living no longer commands the respect it once enjoyed and Haystoun has to prove its validity to himself and his middle-class detractors by demonstrating its meaning by sacrificing his life for the Empire in single combat with the enemy. The book is interesting also for its version of Edwardian courtly love, the lady being Haystoun's social inferior. Instead of helping to raise him to new moral heights, being middle class, she actually drags him down, his virtue being defined in opposition to her lack of it.

Buchan's early iron dreamers culminate in the character of Francis Carey in the book of ideas called *A Lodge in the Wilderness* which is written as a polemic to defend New Imperialists after their disastrous failure at the general election of 1906. Carey is an amalgam of traits which were seen at the time by people concerned with possible imperial decline as desirable in future empire-builders if the Empire were to be knit into a more closely integrated federation. Carey, an entrepreneur who, as a follower of Carlyle, has elevated himself into a responsible statesman, sets a personal example of how Tory imperialism can be carried to the distant corners of Empire and made to work. Chivalry in the service of Empire takes the form of paternalism adapted to the new surroundings. Gentlemanly sportsmanship is shown to produce the advance guard of pioneers who carry the flag into the wilderness, their trail being followed by settlers and builders who are exhorted to become crusaders, carrying British law and order to the natives in the spirit of benevolent trusteeship which is paternalism in the colonial guise. These imperial warriors would battle ignorance, stupidity and barbarism to bring the benefits of civilization to the less advantaged in the spirit of Carlylean Chivalry of Work. Trusteeship of the native races is shown as benefiting all classes of emigrants as the responsibilities of their 'race' elevate them all to the position of leadership and extend to them the benefits of the old-fashioned hierarchical social system which was denied them at home but which they can recreate in their new

surroundings, the model provided by Carey's aristocratic mansion at Musuru which acts as a model hill station and beacon of light in benighted regions from which 'men of destiny' can rule the world.

The introduction of the character of Richard Hannay marks a new departure in Buchan's fiction. Hannay is an amateur spy modelled on the type popularized at the time by the invasion scare thrillers and the Hannay books consequently fuse the elements of the thriller and modern romance of knight errantry. Hannay is an officer and a gentleman in the traditional mould, standing for conventional values and sensibility. In this capacity he is eminently suited for exploring topical issues during the war, having proved his credentials as a member of the establishment in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. In *Greenmantle* he is taken out of the trenches to go on a mission of subversion into the enemy's rear which has all the hallmarks of the old-fashioned romance of knight errantry and where his patriotic fervour and sexual purity are tested. In *Mr. Standfast* he goes on a quest in search of meaning of what Britain is fighting for in the war and discovers this to be 'Old England'. His love interest, as opposed to the foreign seductress modelled on the *femmes fatales* of the Victorian romance tradition in *Greenmantle*, in *Mr. Standfast* is the demure and chaste Englishwoman who can be taken to stand for 'Old England', her conventional, traditional spirit which is undermined by subversive pacifism, embodied by Hannay's rival Lancelot Wake and corrosive German propaganda in the person of Graf Schwabing. In a contest for her hand as a reward for those who would preserve her traditions, Hannay the commonsensical man of action defeats his rivals and earns his right to an English heritage symbolized by his purchase of Fosse Manor which had almost fallen to the enemy within. The former colonial, by putting down roots, embraces the cult of the country house then coming into being, belonging to the new class of custodians of English heritage – middle class professionals – who in the interwar period were increasingly taking over the management of the countryside from the local gentry. *The Three Hostages* and *The Island of Sheep* bear testimony to the emerging country house romanticism in the interwar period, their intrigues being frequently mere pretexts for describing various country sports. The homely conservatism with the moral uplift of these books was a deliberate stance, in tune with the popular mood of the time which favoured continuity and native tradition over forces of disruption, foreign or otherwise.

Lancelot Wake in *Mr. Standfast* can be seen, as his name implies, as a modern version of the unhappy lover of Queen Guinevere and the true vassal of King Arthur. His career as a pacifist and conscientious objector in the service of his country can be shown to mirror elements of the Arthurian story as reworked by Tennyson, an additional dimension being added by his kinship to Galahad in the last pages, his quest being sustained by the Carlylean emphasis on finding and doing one's true work in the spirit of selfless sacrifice.

Vernon Milburne's quest in *The Dancing Floor* allows a reading as a modern version of the story of Perseus and Andromeda, the most popular classically-inspired rescue myth in the Victorian canon of chivalry, the parallel being clearly pointed out in the novel's forerunner, the short story 'Basilissa'. The protagonist bears also traits of the Apollonian solar hero and in the single-mindedness and chastity of his quest also of Galahad. The object of his quest, Koré the modern Andromeda/Persephone/the Mailed Virgin can also be viewed as a female version of Galahad in her own quest to wash off the ancestral stigma of sexual depravity.

Buchan's three historical romances set in 'Old England' can be read as quests for the meaning of true England as he was putting down roots in Oxfordshire and carving out for himself a new cultural heritage. Immersing himself in the lore of the countryside, he was, in *Midwinter* and *The Free Fishers*, exploring the spirit of England by contrasting it to the Scottish one and in the most ambitious of three, *The Blanket of the Dark*, trying to get at the very heart of English national spirit by tracing its roots to the reformation and beyond in order to dissect the nature of the English *via media*. The books are likewise modern romance of knight errantry but with a remarkably changed tonality when compared to the pre-war ones.

Alastair Maclean's quest into England in 1745 to enlist support for Bonnie Prince Charlie's planned invasion in *Midwinter* is full of paradoxes and irony. He comes from a culture which is more archaic and chivalrous than England which has grown placid and pragmatic with commerce and refuses to stir to his calls to heroic action. Individualistic and calculating, the upper classes have exchanged the heroic spirit for fatted ease, while the labouring classes only desire peace, being indifferent to the claims of princes. Maclean has come to seduce England into rebellion but is seduced by England in turn, his mission aborted by the lure of England in the guise of love. The disillusion with the spirit of chivalry which had set in after the war is most noticeable in the treatment of courtly love when we compare *Midwinter* with *The Lost Lady of Old Years* which both deal with the events of 1745, have a similar structure, the hero's quest being aborted so that he fails in his mission and can only join his side in the final failure, and in both cases the hero gets entangled in the affairs of a lady whose unworthy husband foils his original plans but does not measure up as a worthy opponent. What is different is the outcome of their spiritual journeys. At the beginning of *The Lost Lady of Old Years* the protagonist is completely disillusioned but gradually undergoes a positive transformation, contact with noble natures ennobling him and bringing to flower the latent chivalry in his unregenerate soul. The protagonist of *Midwinter* sets on his journey with all his high ideals intact, only to be completely disillusioned. It is also notable that in the earlier book the hero had to cut himself off from his middle-class family to attain spiritual refinement among aristocrats, while in the later book the only truly chivalrous person Maclean can find in all England is a

middle-class clerk whose gauche friendship has to serve as a substitute for the kind of intense sublimated passion which in the earlier book sustained the hero to his lonely end and despite the tragedy gave the book a moral uplift which is completely missing in *Midwinter*, Lady Norreys's feeble deluded innocence having only briefly detracted Maclean from the duties to his prince.

The futility of human ambition is the central topic of *The Blanket of the Dark* where the high-born protagonist is lifted by a whim of fate out of complete obscurity and given a chance to attain aristocratic perfection and win great power, only to turn his back on it, seeking a nobler existence in the world of the spirit. The book traces Peter Pentecost's evolution as a soldier of Christ by pitching his moral struggles against the greater struggle between old and new faith in reformation England. He is made to stand for the commonalty of England and the religious and moral choices he makes establish him as the carrier of the true spirit of the land. His rite of passage also entails complete mastery of the code of chivalry which, fully attained, prevents him from participating in the self-seeking power games of the aristocracy with whom he becomes completely disillusioned. Raised by the people and having found true chivalry only among the lowest of the low, the beggars who are the real masters of the land, he chooses to make his life among them, having chosen soul's salvation above power and rank. *The Blanket of the Dark* offers also the most thorough treatment of courtly love in Buchan's oeuvre, the hero's progress being traced through all the stages of the sublimation of erotic desire into the love of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God.

The Free Fishers is a light-hearted frolic of a holiday book which nevertheless interestingly traces the differences in the English and Scottish national characters, offering to the reader as a carrier of the English national traits the aristocrat Turnour Wyse who is a Regency dandy. The choice of the period is of some interest here since Regency was the period when modern English gentlemanliness was conclusively defined. Wyse is a sportsman, the true Corinthian in the English sense, a man whose behaviour is ruled by the ethics of sports at the time being elevated to cult status. Wyse's sartorial savvy and aloof demeanour, the dandiacal contribution to gentlemanliness, are amply illustrated.

Sandy Arbuthnot, 16th Baron Clanroyden is the archetypal aristocratic adventurer produced by the unique climate of imperial chivalric endeavour between the climax of Empire in the 1890s and the First World War which dealt a death-blow to chivalry. Neither builders nor destroyers, theirs was the world made secure by the British imperial might which they could treat as a big playing field where they could act out their feudal fantasies while acting as spies and explorers. Attracted by environments which conformed to their notions of hierarchy and paternalism they could no longer find at home, they tended to make their reputations and careers in distant parts of the globe unfrequented by tourists and in fields inaccessible to common men. Sandy is a madcap traveller and polyglot, a master of disguise and exotic lore who despite

his huge but narrow reputation in the diplomatic and spying circles finds it hard to adjust to the erosion of aristocratic power in his native Scotland. Frustrated by not finding proper employment at home, the kind of chivalric service to which he is trained being increasingly marginalized in Britain, he creates adventure for himself by looking for employment abroad. It is significant that he chooses to operate in the least accessible parts of the Near East and when these become infected with modern ideas, shifts his playground in *The Courts of the Morning* to South America, then the least touristy of all continents. But even here, for a full-fledged adventure in the old romantic mould to take place Buchan has to create a fictional republic Olifa which is firmly feudal and still safely hierarchical and even a more fantastic Nordic island society in *The Island of Sheep* for Sandy's last adventure. But there is no escaping the modern world even in an isolated island chain in the middle of the Atlantic. Modern indifference and the resurgence of pre-chivalric barbarity ruin his carefully enacted chivalric challenge by making it seem somewhat superfluous.

With Adam Melford in *A Prince of the Captivity* Buchan returns to the iron dreamers of his youth but the circumstances the protagonist operates in have radically changed. Exploration and empire-building no longer providing the kind of environment where they could once exercise their talents on a scale that defied the merely human, this knight errant par excellence has to operate underground. To give him the kind of scope that would allow him to carve out his own game that can still be played by the old chivalric rules, his ties with the day-light world have to be cut completely and any resurfacing be made absolutely impossible. Adam's martyrdom at the hands of a callous socialite highlights the interwar disillusion with the Victorian angel in the house concept but so perfect is this latter-day *chevalier sans reproche* that he adheres to the Victorian code of honour and duty despite glaring injustice and takes all the blame for his wife's actions, ruining his life and career. Having lived according to the highest notions of honour but found only dishonour, Adam dedicates himself to a secret spiritual quest of an intensity that is incomprehensible to bystanders who no longer share his elevated notion of aristocratic service. The object of his quest – the island of Eilean Bàn, the Hesperides/Avalon as a reward for a heroic life to be attained in death – being also his ancestral home, can be seen as a symbol of the loss of the territorial power and socio-political role of his class, its aborted future implied by Adam's dead son who can preside over it only as its guardian spirit. An eminently qualified member of a class that is trained to lead but denied leadership in modern society, Adam's self-imposed role of king-maker looking for a king ties in with the aristocrats' retreat from power in the interwar period, and his insistence on self-abnegation with their spirit of resignation at their fate. In no other class can he find a representative willing to bend himself to the rigours of the truly selfless service of the ideal aristocratic kind and has finally to settle for the least honourable of them – the money-making middle class. Traditionally the sworn enemies of everything

chivalry has stood for, the deadliest and most effective representative of this class has to be taught the proper spirit of public service for him to extend his narrow talent of profit-making to take in the wider concerns of humanity. However, before he can qualify, Adam has to sacrifice himself in order to save his life, leaving open the question whether even the most talented of middle-class men, if not being trained in the proper spirit of public service, can ever fill the vacuum left by a class whose function it was but who is now ousted from power.

It befalls to Edward Leithen in *Sick Heart River* to enact and achieve the ultimate chivalric quest – as a soldier of Christ to fight and conquer Death. In a quest not unlike that of the Grail knights he ventures into the wilderness to make his soul and discovers a challenge that unveils to him the meaning of the gospel of love. In his own way Leithen too is an iron dreamer. Confronted by the immensity of the Arctic North, he is initially humbled into passive fortitude but fighting to preserve life in what he perceives to be the realm of Death, he realizes the meaning of true Christian charity and offers up his life in an act of supreme courage and love to save others in what he perceives to be the eternal cosmic battle between light and darkness, to be rewarded by the beatific vision and an assurance of eternal life.

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The ‘Buchan Project’ also contains three more parts, dealing, respectively, with gentlemen born, nature’s gentlemen and the converse of the chivalric ideal – the failures and villains. These were excluded from the thesis for reasons of space but it would be expedient to give here some indication of findings related to them, so as to adhere to the original intention and scope of the research.

If the gentlemen born discussed in the thesis could claim the advantage of noble birth, Buchan’s gentlemen made and nature’s gentlemen discussed below have to achieve chivalric excellence without such a prerogative.

Gentlemen not to the manor born but with a potential and desire to elevate themselves to the level of the class above them by embracing its values first appear in Buchan’s short stories as heroic traders. It is notable that all Buchan’s scholarly middle-class gentlemen made discussed below are fired by a dream of becoming soldiers, or at least testing their manhood in action at some point in their careers. This potential affiliation with the fighting class is usually realized when they come into contact with its outstanding representative whose chivalric example unleashes heroic yearnings in these otherwise pragmatic and staid characters.

In the short story ‘Earlier Affection’ five unadventurous Glasgow merchants in comfortable middle age nobly embrace the lost cause of Bonnie Prince Charlie, inspired by the heroic stand of a noble Jacobite on the run they meet on their Highland journey. In ‘Divus Johnston’ another Glasgow merchant, when

shipwrecked in the Malay Archipelago and elevated to a position of command by the natives, aware of the obligations of his new position becomes a true empire-builder and soldier, instilling in the natives the British idea of law and order. In 'The Lemnian' an eminently practical trader from Lemnos is inspired by the heroic last stand of the Lacedæmonians to join them in the defence of Thermopylae and die a hero.

The first novel-length treatment of the heroic trader is to be found in the colonial romance *Prester John* in which David Crawford, a lower middle-class Scottish trader, alert to the dangers and challenges of Empire at his lonely outpost in the Transvaal, as it were wins his spurs by almost single-handedly defeating a native uprising. The book is notable for the white hero taking his inspiration from a noble black villain, a novel trait at the time. Andrew Garvald, a yet another Glasgow trader in *Salute to Adventurers*, is in fact a gentleman born but sides with the middle class so emphatically and programmatically as to be considered its true representative. His case can be read as the classical Victorian opposition between manly middle-class business ethic and effete upper-class leisure, the hero being the perfect exponent of Carlyle's Chivalry of Work who in this (semi)-colonial romance yet again saves the budding Empire on the Atlantic seaboard from extinction at the hands of risen natives. The chief argument of the book is a demonstration in practice how vigorous middle-class traders can and should elevate themselves to soldiers and statesmen in order to qualify to take over the leadership, especially of Empire, as Carlyle had exhorted, from the enfeebled aristocracy who had forfeited its right to rule by opting for cushioned inactivity. The latter is thrown into bright relief in *Midwinter* where the Jacobite adventurer who has come to stir the English hearts to rebellion in support of their lawful king finds true heroism only in the lower middle class clerk Samuel Johnson, modelled on the famous lexicographer, who is cast as the abstract principle of chivalry to highlight the born aristocrats' various deviations from it, they collectively having succumbed to the lures of self-interest and ease. Johnson is yet another exponent of the Carlylean Chivalry of Work who, unable to become a true soldier in the field, chooses a mirror career as a fighter for the common good of mankind with the only weapon he can wield – his pen.

The case of David Sempill in *Witch Wood* is Buchan's bitter indictment against religious fanaticism. An unquestioning, idealistic minister finds his mission redefined when he takes up his post in a backward Scottish parish which has fallen prey to blind Covenanting zeal and attendant fall from grace. His frontier is between spiritual light and darkness where he labours heroically as a soldier of Christ to defeat the forces of evil, inspired by the chivalrous example of the Marquise of Montrose, the paragon of Scottish chivalry. The book is a fierce plea for moderation, especially in religious matters, the recalcitrant obscurantism of the Covenanters forcing David to take up arms in defence of his, and Montrose's, conviction that the Kirk should minister to the

souls of believers in the spirit of true Christian charity instead of using the scriptures to seize temporal power.

A lighter note is struck by Anthony Lammas of *The Free Fishers* who is made to stand for Scottish strengths in the union with England and prove that in a patriotic enterprise like the defence of the island from foreign machinations the Scots can be an equal partner, Lammas together with the English baronet Turnour Wyse aborting an assassination attempt on the Prime Minister. The lower middle-class minister and university professor Lammas is shown as in no way inferior to the English aristocrat in chivalric valour, bringing to the union of nations his particular strength – an intellectuality not unlike that of Athens in relation to Rome. He is also shown as more idealistic and romantic than his pragmatic English counterpart but as resolute in action.

Dickson McCunn occupies a special place among Buchan's heroic traders, appearing in three frankly fairy-tale-like romances, two of them 'Ruritanian', which have a changed, slightly ironical, tonality, adjusted to the sceptical and rebellious 1930s. In *Huntingtower* the intensely romantic Glasgow trader whose passion for romance transforms the mundane everyday reality into fictionalized adventure has the role of bridging the gap between the younger and older generations, the implication being that the younger generation, disillusioned by the war, could be converted to the spirit of old romance when exposed to it properly. This is McCunn's task in relation to Mr Heritage, who in turn updates the notion of what constitutes romance for McCunn's generation by drawing his attention to its presence in ugly modernity. The link with reality, already tenuous in *Huntingtower* which is set in the vicinity of Glasgow, nearly dissolves in the two 'Ruritanian' romances, though the first is still set in Scotland. The intrigue in both, based on fictional Evallonian affairs, furnishes Buchan with the kind of environment for old-fashioned romance that is traditional and hierarchical, of the kind no longer readily to be found in modern democratic Britain. McCunn, who in the first book stood for the common man's commonsensical notion of traditional romance which is shown as capable of withstanding the corrosive influence of modern disillusion, in the last two books needs the props provided by well-wishing friends among the younger generation to be able to make the imaginative leap in order to continue to infuse the mundane with the glow of fictionalized romance.

Nature's gentlemen first make their appearance in Buchan's fiction as colourful Border characters in his short stories and an early novel. They are, as befits the popular paternalistic idea of these kind of noble characters prevalent at the time, men of low birth but high ideals who know their place in the class system and are unsullied by the middle-class curse, the trade. They inhabit a pastoral, pre-industrial landscape and are in touch with nature and the land's heroic lore.

'Afternoon' humorously looks at a twelve-year-old country boy's day as he recasts his activities of an afternoon as a chivalric quest modelled on popular

literary stereotypes. 'A Journey of Little Profit', 'The Black Fishers', 'The Oasis in the Snow', 'At the Article of Death' and 'At the Rising of the Waters' look at the harsh reality of life in the Border hills, its follies and superstitions but also the courageous stoicism which the environment demands of its inhabitants. 'Politics and the May-Fly' and 'The Riding of Ninemileburn' deal with the perverted sense of *noblesse oblige* of a Tory farmer who tricks his ploughman into not voting for his rival party on election day and a sick shepherd whose misplaced pride puts the vainglory of a chase before the needs of his dying family.

The innate, un-self-seeking nobility of the Border characters is manifest in 'The Herd of Standlan' in which a shepherd, at great peril, saves his laird's life who has fallen into a treacherous linn and modestly refuses to accept a reward for his deed. In 'Gideon Scott' the eponymous inn-keeper does deeds of bravery and dash, fired by a spirit of romance in his blood, the legacy of his moss-trooping ancestors. In 'Streams of Water in the South' another shepherd carries the body of a dead tramp many miles up into the hills so that he could be buried at his chosen spot, the tramp himself having been a most chivalrous character well known in the area for his generosity. 'An Individualist' ostensibly contrasts the life of a country tramp to a city businessman, only to come to the conclusion that both men are exponents of Carlyle's Chivalry of Work, toiling away for the good of fellow humans. 'The Moor Song' is a paean to the romance of the wayside, taking the form of a dialogue between a shepherd and a whoop, the latter urging the stolid shepherd to listen to the call to adventure in his blood which has stirred his ancestors to embrace lost causes and do brave deeds.

Nicol Plenderleith the tramp and William Bailey the gipsie leader in the novel *John Burnet of Barns* are developed more fully, the first having scope to demonstrate his fighting spirit and mettle on many occasions and the latter behaving like a princely Robin Hood, being a veritable, though self-styled, captain of a great clan, and if need be an army, of Tweedale and Clydeside gipsies.

Shalah the native prince in the western-inspired *Salute to Adventurers* is constructed according to the well-established canons of the genre, bearing all the hallmarks of a good Indian in the American tradition of the Noble Savage.

The story of the chivalric evolution of the hero of 'The King of Ypres' is almost a textbook illustration to how a rough and ready soldier, when given a chance to assume command, rises to the occasion magnificently, his development into a responsible administrator and law-giver mirroring in modern times the path trod by his early ancestors in the dark ages when they had to elevate themselves from simple warriors to community leaders at the dawn of the age of chivalry.

The loveable rascal and big game hunter Peter Pienaar in *Greenmantle* and *Mr. Standfast* emerges as a symbol Christian courage modelled on Mr Valiant-for-Truth and Mr Standfast from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. As an air ace he

is representative of the new class of knights of the air who were during the Great War romantically seen as the true inheritors of the knights of old. As a stoic he exemplifies the kind of spiritual fortitude needed to withstand a long and seemingly hopeless struggle the war had become, his career from a colonial volunteer to hero and invalid being representative of the whole spectrum of fighters, as is his Victoria Cross recognition of the heroism of all who fought on the Western Front.

The historical romances *Midwinter* and *The Blanket of the Dark* set in 'Old England' and *The Free Fishers* in Regency Scotland elevate the common man above the peers by demonstrating that they are the real owners and rulers of the land, its true spirit.

Buchan's villains belong to a long tradition of flawed heroes stretching back to Aristotle's first definition of *hamartia* as the hero's tragic flaw or moral failing. This deficiency in their character brings on their utter ruin, no matter how brilliant or admirable they otherwise are. An interesting subgroup here is life's failures who, not being villainous in the sense of planning evil, nevertheless fall victim to a defect in their character which prevents them from fully realizing their potential as gentlemen or even save their souls.

Among Buchan's short stories there is a group which addresses the balance between character and intellect, a topical concern in a society that elevated character over intellect in defining the gentleman as above all a sportsman. As is clear from the stories, excessive intellectualism undermines manly vigour, in more extreme cases even being responsible for man's physical and mental decline, another topical concern after Darwin whose theory could be interpreted as also pointing to the possibility of degeneration of men and nations. The irruption of primitive or atavistic forces into the everyday reality was a much-explored theme at the turn of the century, writers being preoccupied with mysterious forces and energies beyond the limits of rationality which could be unleashed both in man and the nature around him should the circumstances be auspicious. Buchan explores a number of such cases, covering a range of interrelated concerns following from these preoccupations, all pointing to the dangers of excess and imbalance in various forms, immoderation creating a breach in man's moral defences which lets the darkness in. Buchan is also concerned with roots and a respect for tradition, in a number of cases the tragedy resulting in man's cutting himself adrift from his background which would have anchored his personality more safely. Yet in other cases, however, excessive and uncritical fondness for the past at the expense of the present brings on dire results.

The straightforward case of overall loss of nerve is presented in 'Ship to Tarshish' the protagonist of which, despite his smooth gentlemanly accomplishments, comes across as superficial and lacking character. His problem is his refusal to recognize his middle-class roots, the son of a City banker having modelled his behaviour on aristocratic norms imbibed at public school and

university. He effects the return to his roots by re-learning the work ethic of his class the hard way in the Canadian wilderness and returns to the City to reassume the responsibility of his father's bankrupt firm, a sign of his having mastered the meaning of true gentlemanliness. The pre-eminence of character over intellect is also demonstrated in 'A Reputation' where an intellectually brilliant protagonist is undone by his inability to attain the proper sportsmanlike balance between effort and effortlessness which results in the perversion of his character and spiritual emptiness. The intellectually accomplished protagonist of 'The Kings of Orion' too lacks character, sorely needed in his job as a governor of an imperial outpost in Africa, his excessive fondness for distant historical periods and lands rendering him completely ineffectual at his job. His case belongs to a subgroup of characters in Buchan's oeuvre whose immoderation, usually in their intellectual pursuits, has resulted in a split personality, some of them needing the imaginary other to fully realize their potential. Thus the African governor needs to bridge the gap between his private world where he, as the legendary Prester John, has carved out a mighty Central Asian empire and the reality where he is manipulated by all and sundry. He manages this by making the mental leap of investing his gubernatorial uniform with the imperial power of his waking dreams and becomes a true empire-builder. The protagonist of 'Tendebant Manus', another accomplished but ineffectual scholar and a split personality, adopts as his alter ego the character of his dead brother, a soldier and war hero, and thus rounds off his own deficient character, attaining the desired leadership quality and credibility among men he had so far lacked.

There is a series of characters in Buchan's short stories and novels that are undone by their contact with places which have associations with demonic forces. His favourite *temenos* is usually located on the frontier between savagery and civilisation, light and darkness, and if the precarious balance between these is disturbed, the seemingly benevolent *genius loci* may turn malevolent and enact revenge.

The emphatically modern-minded sportsman of 'Skule Skerry' opens himself to the malign spirit of a little innocuous-seeming island by refusing to recognize its ancient lore and pays for his flippant attitude to tradition with a mental breakdown which nearly splits his personality, the island living up to its evil reputation by showing him the meaning of naked fear. The 'progressive' bohemian couple of zealous intellectuals in 'Fullcircle' challenges the spirit of the place residing in a Restoration country house with their disregard to history in general and the house's in particular by planning to convert it into a working-class refuge for intellectual pursuits. The house, frankly pagan in character and built by a hedonistic sybarite intent on aristocratic country pleasures, exacts its revenge by turning the earnest middle-class radicals into unapologetic hedonists by subjecting them to its seemingly benign, yet insidious influence which undermines their virtue.

The exemplary sportsman with antiquarian interests in 'The Watcher by the Threshold' has allowed his hobby to get out of hand at the expense of sport and suffers the penalty of having his sanity undermined by the *genius loci* residing in what used to be the Roman-Pictish kingdom of Manann on the very edge of the civilized world. Another antiquarian in 'The Wind in the Portico' has neglected his obligations as a country squire to indulge in pagan fantasies centred on the Roman god Vaunus, his flirtation with the pagan spirit still residing on his estate on another frontier between civilization and savagery on the Welsh March resulting in madness and death.

The antiquarian interest in the local lore is the undoing of the British empire-builder in 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' who succumbs to the double lure of the sacred grove in Africa and his own half-Semitic roots, the mixed origins of a character being yet another dangerous factor which might undermine man's defences. This is also evident in 'The Green Wildebeest' where a young Boer with a touch of native blood, who has emphatically cut himself loose from his mixed heritage, desecrates a sacred grove and pays for this challenge to tradition with madness and death.

The novel *Witch Wood* is Buchan's most exhaustive treatment of the lure of the *temenos* and the combined effect of *Natura Maligna* and *Benigna* on men depending on their virtue. The villain Chasehope in the book is Buchan's bitter indictment of the Covenanters's practice of perverting the dogma in order to seize secular power at the expense of the true meaning of Christian *caritas*. By denying man even the most innocent pleasures, the fanatical, blinkered Calvinism of the Scottish church is shown as no better than pagan superstition, its unduly harsh doctrine and punishing practice driving men like Chasehope to seek forbidden pleasure in pagan orgies in the woods. The result is a split personality, brought on by the schizophrenic teaching of the Kirk which allows a man to be an exemplary elder of the church by day and the King-Devil of a witches' coven by night and still retain his conviction of being among the elect.

A similar case of religious mania caused by the perversion of Covenanting Calvinism is illustrated by the villain of *Salute to Adventurers* John Gibb. The animality only glimpsed in Chasehope is here more pronounced, indicating the atavistic, throwback nature of such fanatics who are ready to destroy civilization itself in punishment of what they see as deviation from true dogma.

There is a series of Buchan's grand villains who can be referred to as Luciferian. They are brilliant men whose overweening pride and overbearing conceit are their undoing. The result is a split personality, the mask of gentlemanly accomplishment hiding great evil.

An early example, not yet fully developed but bearing all the hallmarks, is Gilbert Burnet in *John Burnet of Barnes* whose chief character flaw is immoderation. John Laputa, the magnificent black villain of *Prester John*, is considered guilty of reversing the racial hierarchy, his many accomplishments

rivalling those of white men having convinced him that he can outwit his masters in all the fields white men think of as their particular preserve.

With Andrew Lumley, an art collector and a leader of an international gang of anarchists in *The Power-House*, Buchan introduces a line of villains whose conceit is so immense as to border on megalomania and whose field of operations fittingly becomes international. In a large part due to Buchan's growing alarm at the erosion of old norms and certainties during the war years and after, these villains grow more sinister and destructive as the true extent of the damage wrought by the war, especially on men's minds, gradually becomes apparent.

The war-time caricature of the enemy's most salient features in the character of Ulric von Stumm in *Greenmantle* sets to undermine megalomaniac German claims to moral and cultural superiority by showing them to be unfounded. However, mere animalism and brutality coupled with cowardice must have seemed an insufficient combination to explain the resilience of the enemy after three years of war, so the analysis of the German character is taken further in Moxon Ivery/Graf von Schwabing whose added qualities of dissimulation and persuasion point to the subversive nature of German propaganda and the dangers of pacifism on the eve of the final, decisive confrontation. Needless to say, both of these German noblemen are shown as emphatically not measuring up to the standards of English gentlemen.

Dominick Medina in *The Three Hostages* and Castor in *The Courts of the Morning* are veritable fallen angles whose debt to Milton's Satan is manifest. Their over-sized egos, extreme alienation, root- and Godlessness are ascribed to the collapse of old certainties as a result of the war. Moral relativism and the means of mass persuasion available to fanatics with a perverted cause make them a menace to civilization, vulnerable after it was brought to near extinction by the war. They are the more dangerous because their outward mask is that of a traditional man of honour. This, however, is belied by the boundless intellectual vanity which is their motivating force. Medina, especially, is created to show the extent to which the modern media-manipulated image-making by a gifted megalomaniac can take in lulling the society into a false sense of security. The remedy, Buchan seems to believe, would be to restore balance to these unbalanced souls by instilling in them the proper gentlemanly notion of sportsmanship. Such a reformation of character Castor undergoes in *The Courts of the Morning* where the exceedingly rational megalomaniac trader and international saboteur is turned into a model Christian gentleman by exposing him to the true meaning of the chivalrous ideas constituting the gentlemanly code.

The author hereby hopes that the whole 'Buchan Project' in its entirety could one day soon be made available to the general public in book form.

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RESUME IN ESTONIAN

Käesolev doktoritöö „John Buchani kangelased ja rüütellikuse ideaal: härrasmehed päritolult” (John Buchan’s Heroes and the Chivalric Ideal: Gentlemen Born) vaatleb seda, kuidas rüütellikuse ideaal kajastub Buchani meessoost kangelaste käitumises ja valikutes. Töö on osa suuremast raamatuprojektist, mis sisaldab veel kolme osa, mis mahulistel kaalutlustel siinsest tööst välja jäid. Nendeks osadeks olid „keskklassi härrasmehed” (Gentlemen Made), „härrasmehed looduse armust” (Nature’s Gentlemen) ja „läbikukkunud härrasmehed ja lurjused” (Villains and Failures). Et projekt moodustas terviku, on lõppsõnas üldjoontes ära toodud ka nende välja jäänud osade lühikokkuvõte, võimaldamaks saada ülevaadet Buchani haardest ja tasakaalustamiseks töösse lülitatud osa, et see ei jääks liialt aristokraatia-keskseks ja moonutaks nõnda üldpilti Buchani loomingust.

Sissejuhatuses antakse lühiülevaade John Buchani (1875–1940) elust ja loomingust, et asetada mõlemad ajaloolisesse konteksti ja nõnda selgitada nii Buchani enda seost selle klassiga, kelle ideaale ta kangelased kannavad, kui ka seda kirjanduslikku konteksti, milles ta teosed valmisid. Sellel eesmärgil antakse ka lühike ülevaade Buchani teoste vastandlikust retseptioonist. Elu ajal väga populaarne, kuid pärast surma peaaegu unustusse vajunud ja alusetute päevapoliitiliste süüdistuste osaliseks saanud, on Buchani panust shoti kirjandusse tasapisi jälle hindama hakatud. Käesolev doktoritöö püüab omalt poolt kaasa aidata Buchani teoste paremale mõistmisele, asetades need nende ajaloolisesse konteksti nii, et tegelaste motiivid ja käitumismustrid saaksid selgemaks. Selline lähenemine on osutunud vajalikuks, sest see maailm ja tema ideaalid, mida Buchani kangelased kannavad, on tänapäeva lugejale kaugeks jäänud ja nii võivad paljudki nüansid jääda informeerimata lugejale mõistetamatuks, andes võimaluse nende väärsti tõlgendamiseks.

Rüütellikus kui aumehe loomulik käitumisviis, mida Buchani tegelased peavad endastmõistetavaks, on pärast sõjajärgses briti ühiskonnas kaotanud oma kõlajõu. Siin on mitmeid ajaloolisi põhjusi, kaalukaimaks neist on osutunud aristokraatia reaalse mõjuvõimu kärpimine ja sellega kaasnev selle klassi kehtestatud normide hülgamine. Et rüütellikus ehk aumehelik käitmine põhines normide ja arusaamade kompleksil, mis kujunes välja enam kui tuhande aasta jooksul ja oli pidevas muutumises, eri ajastud lisamas uusi nüansse ja taas elustamas vanu uues kuues, on peetud vajalikuks anda ülevaade briti aumehe koodeksi kujunemisest selle ajaloolises kontekstis, et paremini defineerida mõisteid ja näidata nii nende ajaloolist determineeritust kui ka nende pidevat teisenemist. Buchani tegelaskujudes joonestuvad välja rüütellikuse erinevad aspektid. Nii on peetud otstarbekaks defineerida terminid kohe alguses, et töös neile tagasi viidata. Rüütellikus ise kui uurimisobjekt, mis pärast diskrediteerimist Esimese maailmasõja kaevikutes oli suurema osa 20. sajandist unustuses, on viimastel aastakümnetel taas huviorbiiti tõusnud.

Töö meetodiks on nn. lähilugemine (close reading) ja seda seetõttu, et, olles tegelaste motiivide loomulik osa, pole rüütellikust kui sellist, ega lihtsalt isegi härrasmehelikkust, Buchaniil kusagil spetsiaalselt välja toodud või eriliselt rõhutatud. Kuna nii mõnedki Buchani lühijutud ja romaanid on olnud aastakümneid trükist väljas ja on „taasavastatud” alles üsna hiljuti, on peetud vajalikuks ka nende sisu lähim tutvustamine, et selgitada tegelaste käitumismotiive ja nende üldist ideestikku.

Buchan kasvas üles viktoriaanlikus ühiskonnas ja kujunes kirjanikuks Edward VII valitsusajal. See oli aeg, kui kirjanduses ja kujutavas kunstis toimus suur murrang, mis päädis modernismi esilekerkimisega. Sõdadevahelisel ajal toimus ideoloogiline võitlus nii sõjast põhjustatud alalhoidlikkuse kui ikonoklastiliste meeleolude vahel. Selles jõukatsumises asus konservatiivne Buchan traditsiooni poolele ja pälvis sellega modernismi apologetide hukkamõistu. Kogu kahekümnenda sajandi väldanud modernismi kaanoni kinnitamine akadeemias on jätnud varju kirjandussuunad, mis olid samuti novaatorlikud, kuid teistsugusel ja tagasihoidlikumal moel. Viimasel ajal on see nõndanimetatud ajaviitekirjandus (middle-brow literature) rehabiliteeritud ja nii on osutunud omamoodi innovaatiliseks ka seni tagurlike kirjanike hulka arvatud Buchan. Seetõttu on töös peatunud ka nii Buchani uuenduslikkusel kui tema seotusel traditsiooniga.

Buchani romaanide kõige täpsem zhanrimääratlus oleks *modern romance*, millel puudub ühene ja adekvaatne eestikeelne vaste. Nad on enamad kui lihtsalt seiklusjutud (*adventure story*), sisaldades ka üheksateistkümnendal sajandil taas ausse tõstetud rüütliromaanide (*chivalric romance*) motiive, moodsat kurtuaasset armastust (*modern courtly love*), poistekirjanduse elemente (*boys' adventure story*), koloniaalse seiklusjutu (*colonial romance*) mõningaid teemasid, paras annus spioonilugude (*spy story*) võtteid, kujunemisromaan (*Bildungsroman*) raamistikku, veidi Ruritaania (*Ruritanian romance*) hõngu, tõsist ajaloouurimust kõigis, aga eriti ajaloolistes seiklusjuttudes (*historical romance*), poliitilisi ja filosoofilisi arutlusi (*visionary romance, meditative romance, mystical romance, the novel of ideas ja the Condition of England novel*). Neis ei puudu oma annus eskapismi, mis annab neile üldise zhanrimääratluse „poolrealistlik igapäevaelust hetkeks välja astumise seikluslik lugu” (*semi-realistic romance of truancy*), milles kangelane siseneb lühikeseks ajaks temale võõrasse või eksootilisse olustikku, kus toimuvad vaevuusatavad, kuid siiski realistlikud sündmused.

Kõik need erinevad zhanrid on lõppkokkuvõttes tagasiviidavad rüütliromaanile (*romance of knight errantry*), mille algne struktuur on neis kõigis säilinud. Selle elemendid on selgelt näha ka kõigis Buchani romaanides, mida seetõttu on käsitletud kui moodsaid rüütliromaanide (*modern romance of knight errantry*), milles kaasaegne rändrüütel (*knight errant*) läbib kõik tüüpilised rüütli otsi-/eksirännaku (*quest*) etapid, mille eesmärgiks on nii füüsilise, vaimse kui hingelise küpsuse saavutamine katsumuste kaudu.

Uurimise alla võeti eelkõige meessoost tegelased ja seda eelkõige mahulistel kaalutlustel, sest ka Buchani naistegelased on rüütellikkuse seisukohalt väga huvitav uurimismaterjal. Teostest valiti, ikka mahulistel kaalutlustel, romaanid ja need lühijutud, mis pakkusid huvi seoses käsitletava teemaga, jättes kõrvale Buchani ajalooalased uurimused ja autobiograafilised kirjutised, milles samuti on väga huvipakkuv aines rüütellikkuse uurijale. Tegelastest valiti peategelased ja ka mõningad huvitavad kõrvaltegelased, lähtudes selles, kas nende tegelaste puhul toimub arengut või on nad mõnes mõttes representatiivsed. Kuigi töö on kokkupuutepunkte mitmete uurimisvaldkondadega, nagu näiteks postkoloniaalne teooria, soouurimus, retseptioon, pole see siiski soouurimuslik, postkolonialismi uuriv ega reptseptiooni käsitlev töö. Neid valdkondi on puudutatud niivõrd, kuivõrd nad aitavad kaasa töö peateema avamisele, milleks on rüütellikkuse ideaal väljendununa Buchani tegelastes.

Loomult alalhoidliku Buchani vaated kujunesid välja varakult ja ei muutunud elu jooksul kuigivõrd. Seetõttu on asjata otsida tema loomingust drastilisi pettumusi, illusioonide purunemist, vaadetest lahti ütlemist või muud säärast dramaatikat. Pigem on täheldada teatud kurbust, et sõda on seadnud üllad põhimõtted noorema põlve jaoks kahtluse alla, kuid samas on tegemist veendunult optimistliku autoriga, kes ei lase sellel kõigel kõigutada usku inimese ülesse loomusse. Seetõttu pole ka mõtet otsida tema teostest erilist „rüütellikkuse arengu dünaamikat“. Pigem tuleks neid vaadelda kui rüütellikkuse kui mitmetahulise nähtuse erinevate avaldumisvormide kogumit, seda enam, et tema romaanid katavad ligi viiesajaaastast perioodi. Töös on need avaldumisvormid lahti kirjutatud ja illustreeritud näidetega algtekstidest. Allpool on ära toodud mõned üldisemat laadi viited sellele, millest töös juttu on.

Aegade algusest on usutud, et tõeline üllus/aadellikkus on määratud vere või sünniga. Aadelkond, kes defineeris rüütellikkuse kui oma klassi iseloomustava kredo, lähtus samuti vere ülimuslikkusest. Olles saavutanud territoriaalse kontrolli, seadis aadelkond end teistest seisustest kõrgemale, ja sätestas rüütli-koodeksiga oma privileegid ning võimu, määratledes enda ülesandena sõdalastele sobiliku kogukonda ja riiki teeniva rolli. Seda vere salapäraga ümbritsetud müstikat on Buchan temale omase romantikaga käsitlenud ajalooliste vinjettide kogumikus *The Path of the King*. Lähtudes eeldusest, et üllus kandub põlvest põlve vereliini pidi ja et inimlik suurus võib avalduda alles generatsioonide möödudes, kui selle kuninglikku päritolu ei pruugi keegi enam mäletada, laseb ta Skandinaavia viikingist printsil randuda tulevasel Põhja-Prantsusmaal ja vaatleb tema järeltulijate saatust briti ajaloo sõlmpunktides. Buchani ajaloonägemus on etteaimatavalt kinni viktoriaanlikus ajalookäsitluses ja võimaldab huviga jälgida, kuidas ta tegelased ilmestavad erinevaid ajalooepohhe. Neid kõiki ühendab aristokraatlik käsitlus teenistusest, mis eri ajastutel võtab eri vorme.

Kuna Briti impeerium oli veel elujõuline ja enda üle uhke, järgib Buchan tol ajal populaarse „anglosaksluse“ (*Anglo-Saxondom*) ehk „saare rassi“ (*island*

race) saavutuste kujunemise lugu. The viikingist printsi päritolu on pandud endas ühendama viigide ja tooride tõlgendust rahvuse päritolust, millesse vabadust armastavad viikingid on panustanud omadustega, mis tänapäeval kannavad silte „inglise”, „protestantlik”, „demokraatlik” ja „anti-katoliiklik”. Tema anglo-normanni päritolu järglane, kes saabub Inglismaale normannide vallutusega, lisab eelnevale tähendusi nagu „feodalism”, „hierarhia” ja „anglikaanlus”. See normanni rüütel kehastab seadust ja korda, mida inglased on pidanud oma iseäraliseks panuseks maailma ajalukku ja mis saab täiendava kinnituse meenutusest saareriigi rooma pärandist.

Vinjetide tegelased esindavad erineval moel aristokraatliku teenistuse erinevaid aspekte. Viikingist printsi isa, vana kuningas, illustreerib rüütellikust selle algusaegadel, kui aadelkond oli veel kujunemas territoriaalseks eliidiks ja kogukonna liidriks saamisel olid veel määravaks isikuomadused. Normannist Inglismaa uusasukas kehastab seda administratiivset potentsiaali, mille normannid kaasa tõid ja feodalismina uuel kodumaal kehtestasid. Tema järetulija, Flandria kaubitseja, on varajaseks keskaegseks näiteks vabakaubanduse põhimõtetest, millest võib implitsiitselt välja lugeda neid eeldusi, mis hiljem tõid Briti impeeriumile õitsengu. Tema järeltulija on rüütliteenistuse kehastus, olles täiuslik rüütliideaalide kandja ja ristsõdi. On esindatud ka representatiivne renessansi härrasmees, kelle teadmiseni viib ta protestantismi äärele. Ta on ka maadeuurija, kes maabub Ameerikas ja seega tähistab ühenduslülili Uue ja Vana Maailma vahel. Tema üritust aga ei saa kroonida edu, sest usupuhastus on veel toimumata. Enne peab ühenduslülili katoliikliku Prantsusmaaga katkema, et anglosaksi rass saaks rajada uue jumalariigi teispoole ookeani, olles küll võtnud kaasa kõik, mida Vanal Maailmal on kultuuriliselt pakkuda, kuid vaid usu, mis on puhastatud katoliiklikest liialdustest. Usu ja anglosakside saatuse jumaliku ettemääratuse teema läbib kogu raamatut. Iseäranis on see märgata episoodis kullaotsijast Sir Walter Raleigh'ga, kellele tema kapten, viiking-printsi järeltulija, selgitab Ameerika-seikluse tõelist tähendust, kui võimalust rajada uus protestantlik maa. Tollane ajalookäsitus soosis ka Raleigh käsitlemist poliitilise mõtleja ja proto-demokraadina. Buchani soov näidata, kuidas seisusepõhine teenistus kasvab üle demokraatlikuks teenistuseks riigi hüvanguks, on eriti ilmne Koduõja episoodis, kui Cromwelli aristokraadist nõuandja arutleb teemal, kas on põhjendatud hukata võitnud kuningas kui võimu pärikkuse sümbol ja leiab, et see on õigustatud, kui see akt rajab teed meritokraatlikule teenistusele. Tema kuninga tapmisega rüvetatud vereliin langeb ebasoosingusse ja selle esindajad käivad alla, näidates aristokraatliku teenistuse varjukülgi. Kuid, olles emigreerunud Ameerikasse, on neil võimalus uuesti tõusta ja nende tee tagasi tippu kulgeb üle tuttavate stereotüüpide – kütt ja teerajaja, prohvet ja visionäär, tsiviliseerija ja usutooja, kuni varjul olnud fiktsiooniline vereliin kulmineerub Abraham Lincolniga, kes kehastab Buchani jaoks kuninglikku, isetut riigiteenimise ideaali, mis peaks demokraatlikes ühiskondades asuma päritud võimu asemele.

Buchani esikromaan *Sir Quixote of the Moors*, mis kajastab prantsuse härrasmehe moraalse eneseleidmise raskusi 17. sajandi Shotimaal kovenanterite tagakiusamise ajal, sisaldab huvitavaid paralleele ja mõjutusi Tennysoni „Kuninga idüllidest”. Jean, Sieur de Rohaine’i võib vaadelda eriti kui variatsiooni Tennysoni Lancelotist, kelle retk ilmalikkuse kõnnumaal viib ta kokku Anne/Guinevere’ga ja tolle kovenanterist kihlatuga, kes asetub tuntud armukolmnurgas kuningas Arthuri kohale. Jean/Lanceloti heitlusi Tennysonlikus ihu ja hinge sõjas ilmestab kõigi romantiliste reeglite järgi kujutatud loodus, mis kajastab kangelase siseheitlusi. Hingeseisundite peegeldamine looduse ja atmosfääri kaudu on Buchani teoste üks iseärasusi ja erilisi tugevusi.

John Burnet of Barnes’i samanimeline peategelane tegeleb enese leidmisega samuti 1680. aastate Shotimaal, kuid rõhuasetus on siin teine. Romaani kangelane püüdleb Aristotelesliku tasakaalu poole aktiivse ja passiivse elu vahel, defineerides oma positsiooni kui mõõdukust nii religioonis ja poliitikas. See on seisukoht, mis on edaspidi omane kõigile Buchani kangelastele. Huvitav on kangelase kõikumine sõduri ja tsivilisti väärtushinnangute vahel, mis kajastavad tolle ajastu muutuvat ettekujutust aadlimehelikkusest. John oma uudsete intellektuaalsete huvidega ja rafineeritud maitsega on tüüpiline 17. sajandi dzhentlmen-virtuoos. Tema vastand nõbu Gilbert on vanamoodsa rüütellikkuse kehas, mis väärtustab välist hiilgust ja sõjamehe osavust raamatutarkuse asemel.

Francis Birkenshaw romaanis *A Lost Lady of Old Years* on küll aadlipäritolu, kuid alustab oma kujunemisteedkonda sohilapsena ja avalikult häbistatuna. Buchanit on siin huvitanud uinuva vooeuse ärkamine hinges, mida on muserdanud ja rikkunud mitteseisusekohane ümbrus. Täielikust moraalsest allakäigust päästab Francise kohtumine aristokraatliku daamiga, kelle teenistuses õpib ta tundma, mida tähendab rüütellikkus. Oma osa mängivad ka pragmaatiliselt Shoti lauskmaalt pärit kangelase kohtumised mägismaalastega Bonnie Prince Charlie invasiooniga seoses 1745. a., kelle puhul ta kogeb tõelist kangelaslikkust. Francise kasvamine oma härrasmeheks läbi füüsiliste ja hingeliste kannatuste daami teenimise nimel läbib kõiki kurtuaasse armastuse etappe ja kulmineerub ülima tahtepingutusega – loobumisega kõigist maistest rõõmudest, et teenida täiuslikku ideaali.

Tänapäevased aristokraadid ilmuvad Buchani loomingusse kõigepealt ajastu vaimule vastavate nn. raudsete unistajatena (*iron dreamers*). See oli 19. ja 20. sajandi vahetusel populaarne kirjanduslik kuju, kes kehas rivaalide poolt ohustatava impeeriumi valitseja ideaali. Neid üksildasi tegelasi juhtis ja innustas unistus või visioon, mis võimaldas neil tõusta kõrgemale nn. tavainimesest ja mõelda ning tegutseda igavikulises mõõtkavas. Inspireerituna Carlyle’ist, evangeelsest kalvinismist ja imperiaalsest mütoloogiast, ei kõhkle need kangelased ei endas ega oma missioonis, ületades nõnda problematiseeritud mehelikkuse karid uutes, ebakindlates tingimustes. Nende üksildase ja kaaslaste poolt tihti

mõistmist mitte leidva otsirännaku kalvinistlik eesmärk on saavutada katsuste läbi hinge surematus.

Varajaseks näiteks on siin Päästearmee kapten lühijutus „A Captain of Salvation”. See on allakäinud aristokraat, kes on läbi tegemas moraalset ümbersündi „ristiretkel” Londoni East Endi pööramaks patustajaid ära ahvatlustest. Tema enda meelekindlus pannakse proovile moel, mis omab paralleele Kristuse ahvatlemisega Saatana poolt.

Maitland lühijutus „Fountainblue” on romantiline kangelane Byroni igavese ränduri stiilis, kes on üks loodusega, aga väljatõugatu omasuguste seast. Intrigeeriv on tema puhul keskklassi tööetika ja aristokraatliku käitumiskoodeksi kokkupõrge. Maitland on end ise üles töötanud mees, kel pole aega ega võimalust olnud omandada sedasorti „spordimehelikkust”, mida nõuab elegantne salongikultuur. Tõeline „spordimehelikkus”, nagu lühijutt näitab, seisneb võimes astuda kartmatult vastu loodusjõududele, mis võimaldab kangelasel tõusta kõrgemale argipäeva tühisusest ja järgida oma unistust. Temast saab täiuslik impeeriumi-ehitaja, kes puhtalt tahtejõu najal rajab Aafrikas impeeriumile uue koloonia ja hukkub seda tehes, olles tõestanud, et ta on tõelisem härrasmees kui need, kes ta ära tõukasid tema seotuse pärast ärimaailmaga.

Niisugustel kõike teadvatel ja kõike suutvatel kangelastel oli ka tumedam pool. Viktoriaanlik privaatsed ja avaliku sfääri jäik eraldamine oli viinud selleni, et kõiki õrnemaid tundeid hakati seostama koduse, feminiinse sfääriga ja neil polnud lõpuks enam kohta avalikus, mehelikus, sfääris. Kuna kodu seostus nüüd ainult naiselikkusega, arvati liigse kodukesksus olevat mehelikkuse kujunemisele kahjulik ja nii tuli poisid varakult feminiinsest sfäärist eemaldada, sulgedes nad algul internaadi, siis ülikooli ja lõpuks armeeteenistuse eksklusiivselt mehelikku maailma. Selle tulemusena oli noormeestel raskusi kohanemisega küpsete täiskasvanute keerulises suhtemaailmas ja on sümptomaatiline, et kujunes välja mehetüüp, mis idealiseeris poisipõlve komplitseerimata rõõme ja sulgus oma elu mõtte otsinguil unistuste maailma, mida iseloomustas sentimentaalsus, fatalism ja surma-ihalus. Buchanil on kogu kärjääri jooksul rida selliseid kangelasi. Üks varajasemaid on Colin Raden lühijutus „The Far Islands”. Emata laps, kelle isal ei jätku tema jaoks aega, käib ta õigetes koolides, paistab silma sportmängudes, on täiuslik ohvitser ja härrasmees, kuid ei suuda luua sidet vastassugupoolega, veetes kogu oma aja ainult meeste keskel tegeldes mehelike asjadega. Temast saab erak, kes klammerdub oma perekonnapärimuse külge müütilisest saarest meres, kus kangelased leiavad igavese nooruse ja elu. Ta ise arvab selle leidnud olevat hetkel, kui teda tabab vaenlase kuul ühes väikestest impeeriumi sõdadest.

Teine unistustest kantud tegelane on Graves lühijutus „No-Man’s Land”. Siin läheb kangelane ajas kaugemale tagasi, kui tema enda perekondlik pärimus. Jutu laiem kontekst on 19. ja 20. sajandi vahetuse huvi üleloomulike nähtuste vastu ja eriti tol ajal moes olnud fantaasiad primitiivsete, atavistlike jõudude tungimisest tsiviliseeritud igapäevaellu, demonstreerides nendevahelise piiri

haprust ja efemeersust. Graves kui õpetlane ja maadeuurija võitleb oma rüütellikku võitlust just sellisel metsluse ja tsivilisatsiooni piirialal, sattudes Shoti mägedes säilinud piktide kolooniale, kes püüavad teda kui tunnistajat hävitada, kuid kes sellest hoolimata püüab teadusmaailmale elu hinnaga anda teada oma avastusest.

Lewis Haystoun romaanist *The Half-Hearted* ühendab endas raudse unistaja, igavese ränduri, ristisõdija, maadeavastaja, impeeriumi-ehitaja ja moodsa kurtuaasse armastaja, kes püüab endas selgusele jõuda uutes sotsiaal-poliitilistes tingimustes, mis kujunesid maapiirkondades välja pärast maatöölisele valimisõiguse andmist, mis otseselt õõnestas aristokraatlike maaomanike võimubaasi. Haystouni aristokraatlik teenistuskodeks on vastandatud maale trügivate keskklassi professionaalsete poliitikute poliitilisele kitsarinnalisusele ja seda eriti impeeriumi valitsemist puudutavates küsimustes. Hoolimata õõnsast populismist on nad aga nii linnas kui maal tõrjumast võimult Haystouni-suguseid omakasupüüdmataid aristokraate, kes nüüd peavad tõestama teistele ja endale, et nad ei jää milleski alla äärelinna tõusikutele. Innustatuna Carlyle'i õpetusest töö rüütellikusest (*Chivalry of Work*), leiab Haystoun oma töö ja missiooni impeeriumi piiride kaitsel, lüües ainuisikuliselt tagasi Vene impeeriumi invasiooni Indiasse, kinnitades nii endale kui kõigile kahtlejatele aristokraatliku teenistuse-eeskõiguse ülimuslikkust kaubitseja-mentaliteedi ees. Teos on ka huvitav moodsa kurtuaasse armastuse seisukohalt. Haystouni väljavalitu on keskklassi neiu, kes, vastupidi sellise armastuse kaanonitele, on Haystounist sotsiaalselt alamal pulgal ja ka tundeeluliselt vähem rafineeritud ning kes selle asemel, et aidata kangelasel tõusta uutesse moraalsesse kõrgustesse armastuse läbi teda hoopis tagasi kisub, tõestades veel kord keskklassi kitsarinnalisuse ja feminiinse kodulembuse kahjulikku mõju imperiaalse mehelikkuse ideaalile.

Buchani varajased raudsed unistajad kulmineeruvad Francis Careyga idee-romaanist *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, mis on kirjutatud vastukajana impeeriumi veelgi tugevamini föderaliseerida soovinud jõudude valimiskaotusele 1906. a. Carey on kogum omadustest, mida eriti tooridest imperialistid soovisid näha impeeriumi valitsejates uuenenud oludes, kus impeeriumi ekspansioon ei olnud enam võimalik ilma sattumata konflikti suurriikidest rivaalidega. Et hoida ära impeeriumi nõrgenemine või koguni allakäik, peaksid Buchani nägemuse kohaselt ettevõtjad järgima Carlyle'i üleskutset ja ülendama end riigimeesteks. Rüütellikkus impeeriumi teenistuses on paternalism uues kuues ja uutes oludes. Kandes traditsioonilised hierarhilised väärtused, mis demokratiseeruvad Suurbritannias juba kippusid kaduma, maailma kaugeimatesse soppidesse, kus iga britt, kuitahes madalast soost, võiks tõusta läbi eeskostja rolli pärismaalaste eest aristokraatliku teenistuse kõrgustesse, võib ka iga ettevõtja saada nn. saatuse poolt valitud meheks, kuuludes kas rajaleidjana, usutoojana, asunikuna või asevalitsejana impeeriumi sõdalaste eelsalka, kes võitlevad tsivilisatsiooni ja metsluse piiril, rajades tsivilisatsiooni eelposte, niisuguseid nagu Carey mõis Musurul, mis justkui majakas valgustab veel pimeduse kütkes maad.

Richard Hannay lugudes segab Buchan kokku moodsa rändrüütelse ja, selle zhanri ühe rajajana, spioonilood. Hannay on koloniaalse taustaga ohvitser ja härrasmees, kes thrillerites *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Greenmantle*, *Mr. Standfast*, *The Three Hostages* ja *The Island of Sheep* kannab konventsionaalseid väärtusi ja on sellisena väga sobilik kajastama nn. tavainimese väärtushinnaguid päevakajalistele probleemidele, mis selle tegelase puhul seostuvad eelkõige Esimese maailmasõja ja selle järelmõjudega. *Greenmantle*'is on Hannay roll välja kanda vastandus paaris inglaslikkus-saksalikkus, ei näidata nende ideede ülimalikkust, mille nimel britid sõdisid. *Mr. Standfast*'is, mis püüab anda vastust küsimusele, milliseid omadusi on vaja, et pikaks veninud sõda võita, on Hannay koondkaju nendest briti härrasmehelikest omadustest, mis peaks kindlustama võidu. Pärastsõjaaegses sotsiaalses ja kultuurilises peataolekus on Hannay nende konservatiivsete väärtuste kandja, mis aitavad parandada haavu ja maa jälle üles ehitada. Väikemõisniku ja maaomanikuna on Hannay ka see, kes hoiab järjepidevust ja traditsioone maal, kus vana aristokraatia võim on taandumas ja kandumas üle uuele regionaalsele eliidile, milleks on kõrgema kesklassi valgekraed nagu Hannay.

Lancelot Wake, kes on patsifist ja Hannay konkurent Mary Lamingtoni käele ja südamele *Mr. Standfast*'is, on tõlgendatav kui moodne versioon Lancelotist armukolmnurgas Lancelot-Arthur-Guinevere, eriti selle Tennysonlikus võtmes. Mary/Guinevere, keda võib vaadelda Inglismaa sümbolina, ei otsusta Wake'i kasuks, sest patsifismis on liiga palju sõnu ja vähe tegusid ja nii ei võideta sõdu. Ent Buchani sooviks on näidata, et isegi kui keegi ei vali sõdalase teed, nagu Hannay, on siiski võimalik alati teenida kodumaad muul moel, tuleb vaid Carlyle'likult leida oma töö ja ülesanne. Astudes Hannay/Arthuri kaudu enda teadmata riigi teenistusse, leiab Wake enda missiooni Hannay sideohvitserina, kes, keeldudes lõpuni kandamst relva, annab siiski kaevikus oma elu oma maa võidu nimel. Wake'is on peale Lanceloti isetuse ka tugev annus Sir Galahadi üllast eneseohverdust ideaali nimel.

Vernon Milburne'i retk Kreeka saarele päästmaks metsistunud kohalike elanike käest puhast neitsit romaanis *The Dancing Floor* on kaasaegne versioon Perseuse ja Andromeda müüdist, mis oli üks populaarseid klassikalise rüütellikuse lugusid sajand tagasi. Peategelasel on ka Apolloliku päikesekangelase jooni ja nii kangelasel kui kangelannal on ühisjooni Galahadiga.

Buchani kolm ajaloolist romaani, mille tegevuskohaks on „Vana Inglismaa” – *Midwinter*, *The Blanket of the Dark* ja *The Free Fishers* – on katsed tabada Inglismaa ja inglaste põhiolemust.

Midwinter, mille tegevus toimub 1745. a. Stuartite restauratsioonikatse ajal, püüab Inglismaa olemust tabada läbi shotlase silmade. Alastair Maclean on salamissioonil saabunud Oxfordshire'sse õhutamaks inglise maaomanikke liituma mässajatega, kuid leiab eest palju arenenuma ja ka palju pragmaatilisema ja elunautivama maa, kui tema ikka veel feodaalne kodumaa. Kaubandus ja äri on asunud heroilisuse asemele ja kokkupuude selle arvestava ja indi-

vidualistliku maailmaga purustab ka kõik Macleani rüütellikud illusioonid. On tähenduslik, et ainuke tõeliselt härrasmehelik inimene, keda ta Inglismaal kohtab ja kes on veelgi idealistlikum kui ta ise, on alamkeskklassist pärit Dr Johnson, kes on abstraktse härrasmehelikkuse võrdkuju ja kellega võrreldes paljastub mitmet sorti päris härrasmeeste võimetus ja soovimatus käituda vastavalt seisuslikule ideaalile. Siin on tunda pärastsõjaaegseid pettumusmeeleolusid, kui selgus, et kaevikusõda oli diskrediteerinud ka läbi aegade kestnud ideaalid, mida võib kokkuvõtvalt nimetada härrasmehelikkuseks. Ajastute kontrast tuleb eriti ilmsiks, kui võrrelda *Midwinterit* ennesõjaaegse romaaniga *A Lost Lady of Old Years*, eriti mis puutub kurtuaasse armastuse käsitlusse. Mõlema romaani tegevus toimub ühel ja samal 1745. a. ja nende struktuur on peaaegu identne. Peakangelane asub täitma daamilt saadud ülesannet, kuid kaldub eesmärgist kõrvale, takerdudes selle daami vääritu abikaasaga seonduvatesse intriigidesse. Asi lõpeb nii talle kui tema üritusele traagiliselt, kuid kui varasemas raamatus toimub kangelase ülendumine ja moraalne täiustumine, siis hilisemas asub kangelane oma retkele täis ideaale ja peab neis kõigis pettuma.

Inimlike ambitsioonide tühisus on keskne teema romaanis *A Blanket of the Dark*, kus kuninglikku verd peategelane Peter Pentecost, kes on üles kasvanud teadmatuses nii oma seisusest kui päritolust, tõstetakse hetkeks välja tema anonüümsusest ja võimaldatakse talle seisusekohane elu ja kasvatus, et ta asuks vana kooli aristokraatlike perekondade mässu etteotsa kukutamaks kuningas Henry VIII. Peteri hingelise arengu teekond lihtsast külapoisist trooni-prekendiks avab ta silmad aristokraatide omakasupüüdliku tühisuse ja vaeste loomupärase ülluse suhtes. Olles täielikult omandanud rüütlikoodeksi, ei võimalda see ega tema loomupärane lihtrahvalik üllameelsus minna tal ei oma rahva ega kiriku vastu, et osaleda aristokraatlikes intriigidest ja ta otsustab valida anonüümse elu lihtrahva hulgas. Saanud kirikliku hariduse, on ta ka pädev otsustama erinevate usupuhastuse vormide üle, mis võistlevad oma koha pärast reformatsiooniaegsel Inglismaal ja ta teeb sama valiku, mis kuningas, andes nii lihtrahva sanktsiooni kujunevale *via mediale* ja näidates, et lihtrahvas ja kuningavõim on usuküsimustes üks. Kurtuaasse armastuse seisukohalt on raamat väga huvitav, sest Peteri areng armastuse vallas järgib samm-sammult sellise armastuse kõiki keskajal tunnustatud arenguetappe ja kulmineerub erootilise armastuse sublimeerumisega armastuseks Neitsi Maarja vastu.

The Free Fishers, mille tegevus toimub Napoleoni sõdade ajal, vastandab shoti ja inglise rahvusliku identiteedi, kinnitades samal ajal nende kokku kuuluvust ühises liidus pärast 1707. a. liidulepingut. Shotlasi esindab keskklassi päritolu intellektuaal, mis ühtib tol ajal levinud arvamusega, et shotlaste panus liitu oli ennekõike intellektuaalne. Rikkam ja võimsam Inglismaa on esindatud aristokraatliku Turnour Wyse'i näol, kes on tõeline korintlane ja dändi ja esindab neid härrasmehelikke väärtusi, mis täiendavad keskklassi omi nõnda, et koos töötades on neil võimalik hävitada nii riigi sise- kui välisvaenlane.

Sandy Arbuthnot raamatutes *Greenmantle*, *The Three Hostages*, *The Island of Sheep* ja *The Courts of the Morning* on arhetüüpne aristokraatlik seikleja, milliseid sünnitas Briti impeeriumi stabiilsus paarikümnel aastal enne Esimest maailmasõda, mis sellisele nähtusele ka lõpu tegi. Impeeriumi äärealad olid neil aastakümnetel kui suur aristokraatlik mängumaa, kus võis veel leida selliseid hierarhilisi ja paternalistlikke ühiskondi, mis demokratiseeruvad emamaal olid juba kadumas. Üha tõrjutumad kodumaal, võisid aristokraatidest seikluseotsijad sellistes arhailistes kohtades elada välja oma rüütellikke fantaasiasid, suheldes kohalike ülikutega kui võrdsetega ja tegeledes väikselt spionaazhiga. Sandy on moodne rüütel, polüglotist maadeavastaja ja ka impeeriumi sõdalane, kes otsib maailma kaugetes paikades võimalusi selliseks teenistuseks ja tööks, milles saaks rakendada neid oskusi ja omadusi, mida üha keskklassistuvus ühiskonnas kodus enam ei vajata.

Kui Sandy veedab suure osa ajast tegutsedes maskeerunult ja põranda all, on tal siiski arvestatav reputatsioon ka avalikus elus. Adam Melford raamatust *A Prince of the Captivity* tegutseb juba täielikult põranda all, olles katkestanud sidemed oma seisusekohaste ringkondadega. Selles võib näha autoripoolset mõõndust, et seesugusel viktoriaanlikul rüütellikusel nagu seda Adam kehastab, pole 1930. aastate Inglismaal enam kohta. Aristokraatia on võimult lõplikult tõugatud ja nii peab Adam otsima väärikat järglast, kes asuks selle klassi kohale, kes oli kasvatatud juhtima, kuid kellel seda enam teha ei lasta. Väljavalituks osutub kõige vähem lootust andev keskklassi finantsmahninaator, kelle Adam peab härrasmeheks koolitama, et ta suudaks vastu astuda pead tõstvatele türanniatele Euroopas. Adamiga pöördub Buchan tagasi raudsete unistajate juurde. Ka Adami moraalse enesetäiustamise otsirännak lõpeb surmaga ja kujuteldava tagasipöördumisega oma lapsepõlve saarele, unistus millest on kandnud teda läbi raamatu arvukate katsumuste.

Edward Leithenile romaanist *Sick Heart River* saab osaks kõige täiuslikum otsirännak kogu Buchani loomingus, mis lõpeb, nagu Graalirüütliel, kohtumisega Jumalaga silmast silma. Leithen kui Kristuse sõdalane kogeb võitluses surmaga ja elu eest kristliku inimarmastuse tõelist tähendust ja kogu raamat kujuneb Buchani kirjanduslikuks testamendiks.

Töö inglisekeelses kokkuvõttes antakse ka ülevaade Buchani Projekti ülejäänud kolme osa tulemustest, mis mahulistel kaalutlustel doktoritöösse ei mahtunud, kuid koos töös esitatuga moodustavad raamatu, mis loodetavasti lähiajal trükkis ilmub.

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- 2003 The British Council grant for participation in the Oxford Conference on Teaching English Literature
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Administrative positions

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- The Estonian Centre for British Studies, founding member and executive director
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- The Estonian Association for Canadian Studies, founding member
- The Estonian Association of Comparative Literature, founding member
- The 1st (1994) and 2nd (1995) International Tartu Conferences on American Studies, member of the organizing committee
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Saadud stipendiumid

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- John Buchan's 'Sick Heart River': A Sanctuary and a Watchtower*. Raili Põldsaar, Krista Vogelberg (editors). Points of Convergence. Cultural Studies Series No. 4. Tartu University Press, 2003
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**DISSERTATIONES PHILOLOGIAE ANGLICAE
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1. **Kristina Mullamaa.** Towards a dynamic role conception of liaison interpreters: an ethnographic study of self-description of practising liaison interpreters in Estonia. Tartu, 2006.
2. **Raili Põldsaar.** Critical discourse analysis of anti-feminist rhetoric as a catalyst in the emergence of the conservative universe of discourse in the United States in the 1970s–1980s. Tartu, 2006.