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MIDDLE CLASS THOUGHT IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND
AS REFLECTED IN
THE NOVELS OF THOMAS DELONEY

by

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B.A., Montana State University, 1948

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1950

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Elizabethan period of English history was a period of unprecedented change. At no time in the history of England had changes on all levels -- social, economic, and religious -- taken place so vigorously. During this era England rose from a battle-scarred medieval state to a powerful commercial nation, powerful enough to challenge the political and economic supremacy of Spain. The story of this amazing transformation, detailed and complex, has been told and retold. The society which made such monumental contributions to the world of drama and poetry, the courtly society of Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare has claimed the attention of multitudes of scholars while the group of "University Wits" has enjoyed more than a fair share of scholarly treatment. To accept only the literary productions of these two groups of writers, however, is to ignore completely a large body of writing which played an enormous part in shaping the attitudes and opinions of a majority of the Elizabethan populace. The

"Aristocratic" writers of the Renaissance period have left us models of poetic and dramatic excellence clearly establishing their creative genius, models which have served as criteria for literary productions to the present time. But while the courtly writers and "University Wits" shaped the literature of England, another group of writers shaped the economic, social and political attitudes of the fast developing middle class. The prose writers, the pamphleteers, and ballad-hawkers commanded a vast audience, an audience of common unliterary people who were interested in living and who responded to a medium recognizing that interest and catering to it.

Because of the limited circulation of the poetry of the courtly writers, those poems which are today recognized as having more than considerable merit were unknown to all but the favored few privileged to read them in manuscript form. The plays, while they were available to a wider audience, were not influential in fashioning the actions or attitudes of playgoers in the extremely important matter of making a living in a world where ever-increasing competition demanded shrewd application of practical concepts. And in considering

the literature of the Elizabethan period, indeed, one often tends to forget or to ignore the mind of the average man; for to the modern intellectual and his literary ancestor, the very thought of a "middle-class mind" is distressing. To contemplate seriously the ability of the bourgeoisie to produce anything worthwhile or thought-provoking is unworthy of genuine scholarly consideration. It must be remembered, however, that the growing middle class in England formed the solid core of English development, both socially and economically. The importance of the middle class as a power behind the development of English society, and the literature of that society, cannot be over-emphasized.

The population of England at the time of the reign of Elizabeth could be divided roughly into three major groups: the upper class, consisting of titled nobility, landed gentry, and the more important professional men; the lowest class embracing the common laborers, the illiterate peasants, and the small artisans whose simple arts did not call for any highly developed skills; and the middle class lying between the two extremes, comprising the merchants, tradesmen,

and craftsmen whose main interest lay in business profits and commercial ventures. From this last class came the individual to whom we can refer as the "average citizen" or the "middle class citizen". The three classes were by no means mutually exclusive, for owing to economic and political fluctuations, there was a constant mingling of the three groups. Members of the middle class, who because of their business prowess, acquired large amounts of money and land, were constantly entering the upper strata while the less fortunate members of the middle class were slipping down into the less-privileged lower group. At the same time, because of the nature of the economic structure, members of the lowest class were able to fight their way up into a more beneficial social position. The economic and social climate of the time encouraged the development of the "rugged individual" who either forged ahead to economic and hence to social supremacy, or lost his grip and fell to the bottom of the pile. The dog-eat-dog concept of modern industrial society was being born, and a special philosophical outlook was evolving to explain that way of life and to perpetuate it. The great middle

class with its numerical superiority and economic supremacy was able to establish a completely new system of society. It developed a new way of living, a code of ethics and a new set of ideals which gave it a reality that effectively fashioned the modern western society. Trade was not a tarnishing thing to the middle class merchant; his work was his ladder to success and something of which he could be intensely proud. He did not conceal his success, but boasted of his good fortune to the world. He built a stronger nation than any other in his day, and influenced present-day culture to an extent that cannot be denied.

With the growth of the importance of the merchant and tradesman, the concept of government and its relation to the governed changed radically as a great interdependence came into being. The government became the prime instrument in fostering and protecting the interests from which it gained its economic existence. Because government was assuming a more paternal attitude over its citizens, especially in matters of economic concern, those same citizens, to protect better their economic security and well-being, implemented their government with office-holders and representatives who

effectively carried through those policies designed to encourage development and expansion of business activities which continued to enrich the country. Somewhere in this hectic picture of intensified activity on all levels, stood the man whose new ambitions, eagerness for advancement, and tremendous energy and optimism, made possible the expanding commercial world about him. This individual, this average middle class being, whose ambitions and attitudes present such a striking parallel to those of his modern counterpart, is of supreme interest to us. Our modern society has not been established in the pastoral niceties of Sydney's Arcadia, nor the wearisome parallelisms of Lyly's Euphues. Nor are we strictly the descendants of the cut-purses or pick-pockets of Greene's Conney-Catching Pamphlets, and Nashe's adventurous Jacke Wilton. Those sources and ones similar have made us aware of language and form in literature; they have shown us the Elizabethan rogue at his best, but their influence does not extend so much into the realm of economic living as others. The world in which we live is, for all of its modern externals, the natural development of those concepts of society

laid down by the writers who wrote specifically for the middle class. It is that group to which we owe our ideas of individual enterprise, chance for unlimited advancement, our common code of ethics and standards of morality. The economic and political development of the Elizabethan period fostered those attitudes toward life which have found their way in modified form into our own middle class society.

The establishment of arbitrary points of reference and limitation will always have the tendency to exaggerate the importance of certain ideas and observations and to minimize the value of others. The extent of this artificial emphasis of some definite concepts or ideas to the detriment of others depends largely upon the type and scope of the material being handled. Where large areas of thought are being considered it is often necessary to reduce ideas of considerable complexity and widespread implications to relatively simple statements of broad general meaning. The term "middle class" is in itself an abstract designation which cannot be fully defined and described by limiting its application to a fixed group of people engaged in certain trades and

possessed of a specified amount of material wealth. A discussion of the term itself would undoubtedly lead to weighty interpretations which have no place in this particular paper. The term shall be employed hereafter in its usual connotative sense as that segment of modern society which is neither extravagantly possessed of material goods, nor unusually deprived of them. It is a class of shopkeepers, and men owning small businesses which they manage themselves. It is a class which at different times has been subdivided to provide an "upper middle class" and a "lower middle class" to distinguish more finely the relative prosperity of its members and to indicate its flexible nature. Whatever the exact meaning of the term and the subtle gradations of material well-being which have resulted in its use as a fairly definitive expression, it is generally conceded to owe its genesis to economic considerations. During the Elizabethan period economic laws were not so highly refined as they are at the present time, but the expansion of commercial activities did produce a class which bore the burden of developing and refining those activities to an almost unlimited extent economically and thus formed the way of life essential to the new commercialism.

II.

Out of this maelstrom of activity that made up the Renaissance scene in England the bourgeois class began to form. The feudal system of lord and serf began to melt away on an economic level under the pressure of rising commercialism.¹ A highly organized social stratification remained as a levelling influence; that is, the system of royalty, nobility, and commoner that had arisen as an economic necessity remained but was rapidly losing its hold on the common classes as an economic factor and was being relegated to the insignificant status of a social nomenclature. The medieval society was in the last stages of its

1. For a more detailed study of the economic development in England see Frederick C. Dietz, An Economic History of England, New York, 1942, p. 103; "The family or dynasty of the Tudors ruled as kings in England from 1485 to 1603. Their accession to the throne was followed by the end of the long period of civil wars which had been one of the manifestations of the political disintegration characteristic of the fifteenth century.... Feudalism had been undermined by the rise of the money economy and of capitalism. Under the circumstance of increasing national wealth and in the face of a new spirit of acquisitiveness which the appearance of material wealth evoked, a new code regulating men's relations with one another was formulated."

existence; no longer were citizens tied to a social level from which they never could find release. The power of money began to supplant that of high birth. Respectability and high place could be purchased, and anyone with a fair amount of prudence and business ability could become quite rich and respectable if he tended strictly to business.

But the acknowledged literary world still clustered about the court because writing was considered a learned and genteel refinement. Indeed, writing for publication was not considered nice in the court circles and those who did write ballads and broadsides to be sold in the streets received the censure of their fellow writers and very little by way of economic return. Despite the low esteem in which balladeers and pamphleteers were held, the product of their pens was in wide demand by the mass of people in the large cities who took an understandable interest in the ever-expanding commonwealth. The shopkeepers and the men in the street looked to their lavish court and gloried in the splendor of their ruler and nation; on every side they could see their country becoming enriched and powerful, developing in all phases of

social and economic activity. London, the seat of political and economic activity, provided a wide open field for the talents of the balladeers and pamphlet-writers headed by William Elderton and including Philip Stubbs, Robert Armin, and the object of this study, Thomas Deloney. If any man could be said to be a product of his time, to present in himself, his actions, and attitudes the spirit of the age in which he lived and worked, to foretell in his being the destiny of his country, that man is Thomas Deloney, pamphleteer, balladeer, and writer of novels.

Deloney appeared on the London scene in 1583 when he printed a translation from Latin of A Declaration Made by the Archbishop of Colen, upon the Deede of His Marriage Sent to the States of His Archbishoprike. The dedication is to "John, Bishoppe of London" and is signed by Thomas Deloney, who abhors "...the tyranny of superstitious Popes, and Prelates of Rome, whose intollerable pride is of the Lord detested...". The letter was a defense of Ghebard the Archbishop of Cologne, Prince and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, directed to Gregory XIII stating his determination to renounce his vow of celibacy and enter into marriage. The work, Deloney's only

known translation, displayed his virulent anti-Catholicism toward the Catholic Church. In light of his subsequent work it is obvious that his only motive in translating the exchange of letters was that of displaying his anti-Catholic disposition, a motive which would have appealed to the middle class of which Deloney was a most voluble member.

The date of Deloney's birth is unknown; Ebsworth places it at 1543,² but Mann suggests that the assignment is capricious.³ Whatever the reason for Ebsworth's choice, 1543 has remained as the authoritative date. His birthplace is also a matter for conjecture. Ebsworth thinks that he was "probably born in London";⁴ Nash, however, in Have With You To Saffron-Walden (1596) speaks of Deloney as "the balleting silk-weaver of Norwich",⁵ and since Deloney was known to have been in London as early as 1583, it would logically follow that Nash was speaking of the town of Deloney's

2 Dictionary of National Biography, V, 777.

3 Thomas Deloney, Complete Works, Francis O. Mann, ed., Oxford, 1912, p. vii.

4 DNB, V, 777.

5 Thomas Nashe, Complete Works, R. B. McKerrow, ed., London, 1904, III, 84.

birth. At least it indicates that Deloney had strong ties in Norwich, stronger apparently than those in London where he had resided thirteen years prior to Nash's statement. There is little doubt of Deloney's having followed the silk trade, that profession having been associated with him in several sources. Mann suggests that his name may indicate French ancestry and proceeds to build an elaborate background on that assumption which involves his strong protestant feelings and points to the possibility that his ancestors were refugees⁶ from Belgium or France. Whether or not he was descended from continental refugees, Deloney takes a tremendous interest in them, and alien artisans figure prominently in his novels. The only other bit of biographical information known of Deloney centers around an entry in the registers of St. Giles, Cripplegate, showing that Richard Deloney, son of Thomas, was christened there on October 16, 1586.⁷

In 1586, also, he published a broadside which was indicative of the type of sensational journalism

6 Mann, op. cit., p. vii.

7 Ibid., p. viii.

that eventually made him the most popular balladeer in London: A Proper Newe Sonet Declaring the Lamentation of Beckles in Suffolke, Burnt by Fire on S. Andrew's Eve Last Past.⁸ In this particular ballad, the town of Beckles is the narrator, and to the accompaniment of a popular tune it sings a mournful lament exhorting others to learn by its lesson and "live not in strife and envious hate/ To breed each other thrall, Seeke not your neighbors lasting spoyle/ By greedy sute in laws...". This piece set the pace for most of Deloney's lugubrious ballads, all of which might justifiably be labelled dirges because of their mournful content. Also in that year Deloney published A Most Joyful Song at the Taking of the Late Trayterous Conspirators...Fourteen of Them Have Suffered Death on the 20 and 21 of September. The song is far from joyful; it lists the conspirators involved in the Babington Plot to unseat Elizabeth and place Mary Stuart on the throne. Since the execution took place in London, Deloney might

⁸ All the ballads referred to are to be found in Mann, op. cit.

very well have been on hand to witness those "Englishmen with Romish hearts" receive "that death they have deserved".

Even though only a few of his works remain Deloney's output for the next eight years must have been extensive, for it is from this period that he emerges as the most popular balladeer in London. Robert Greene refers to him in his Defence of Conny-Catching and speaks quite familiarly of him as a balladeer:

Such triviall trinkets and threedbard trash, had better seemed T.D. whose braines beaten to the yarking up of ballades, might more lawfully have glaunst at the quaint conceites of conny-catching and crasse-biting.⁹

Gabriel Harvey classes him with the common pamphleteers of London and advises Nash "to least lesse with Thomas Delone, or to atchieve more with Thomas More"¹⁰. Styrpe in his edition of Stow's Survey notes that

abusive Ballads and Libels were too common in the City in Queen Elizabeth's

⁹ Robert Greene, Cuthbert Conny-Catcher, G.B. Harrison, ed., London, 1924, p. 11.

¹⁰ Gabriel Harvey, Complete Works, A. Grosart, ed., London, 1884, II, 280-1.

time, therein reflecting too boldly and seditiously upon the Government, particularly in case of dearth. ¹¹

It seems that in one of his ballads, Deloney had complained of a dearth of grain in the realm and had pictured the Queen "speaking with her people ¹² dialogue wise in very fond and undecent sort".

In 1592 William Elderton, king of the ballad-makers, died. ¹³ He was a notorious drunkard and his excesses in that direction had cast his fellow balladeers as well as himself into ill-repute. When Deloney became general of the ballad-makers, he did not indulge in the excesses of his predecessor -- that is in drink; however, his subject material was every bit as sensational as that of Elderton, one of whose extant ballads is entitled, The True Figure and Shape of a Murtherous Chyd Which Was Borne at Stony Stratford. Some of Deloney's ballads from this period relate the sordid details of various murders and include

11 John Stow, Survey of London John Strype, ed., London, 1754, V, 333.

12 Mann, op. cit., p. ix.

13 DNB, VI, 591.

The Lamentation of Page's Wife of Plymouth (1591) and The Lamentation of George Strangwidge (1591). In August of 1588 he published three broadsides which were important in their time as news items: The Happy Obtaining of the Great Galeazo, an exciting account of the Spanish Armada; The Strange and Cruel Whips Which the Spaniards Had Prepared, a horror story of war wherein the English would be whipped into conversion to the Catholic faith; and The Queen's visiting the Camp at Tilburie, a strikingly authentic account of the Queen's visit which agrees with Elizabetha Triumphans (1588) by John Aske and was written the day after the visit.¹⁴ His Strange Histories contain many other ballads which proved very popular; The Kentishmen With Long Tales, The Drowning of Henry I's Children, The Dutchess of Suffolk's Calamity, Henry II Crown-His Son King, and other historical ballads. He also issued a collection under the title A Garland of Good Will which contains legendary tales of English history as well as contemporary fact and fiction.

¹⁴ Mann, op. cit., p. 597.

The works with which this investigation will deal are three prose novels which Deloney wrote near the end of his life:¹⁵ Jacks of Newberie, the story of John Winchomb, a famous clothier of the city of Newberry; The Gentle Craft, parts I and II, incidents about the shoemakers in England; and Thomas of Reading, a loosely connected series of incidents about clothiers. Within these three novels, works written about middle class life by a middle class craftsman, can be found elements of thought typical of the bourgeois citizen. Since Deloney speaks most authoritatively about the clothiers with whom he had the most intimate acquaintance, Jacks of Newberie naturally contains the bulk of evidence supporting the contention that Deloney's ideas are those of the class about which he writes. The Gentle Craft, Parts I and II, in dealing with shoemakers, departs from the area with which Deloney is most familiar, that of the clothing trade, but nevertheless, presents in Simon Eyre, the traditional bourgeois here, a

15 See George W. Kuehn, "Thomas Deloney: Two Notes," MLN LII (1937) 103-105, for a brief discussion of the probably dates of Deloney's three prose novels.

picture of a well-rounded middle class ideal. Returning to the clothing trade in his final novel, Thomas of Reading, the author details some experiences of middle class heroes in light of typical bourgeois ideals.

CHAPTER II

JACKE OF NEWBERIE

In 1597 Thomas Deloney wrote The Pleasant¹
Historie of John Winehomb or Jacke of Newberie,
stating in his dedicatory passage that the book
was a labor of love written for the "well minded
Clothiers; that heerein they may behold the great
worship and credit which men of this trade have
in former times come unto". It is possible, how-
ever, that he was commissioned to write the novel
by a clothing guild and was suitably rewarded for
his efforts.² If he were hired to write the
praises of the weavers' craft, he makes no mention
of his patronage either in Jacke of Newberie or
his succeeding works. Whether or not he undertook
the writing of the story voluntarily without
thought of remuneration, it is, like its compan-
ions, a propaganda novel, designed "to impress
the powers-that-were with the importance of basic

1 Mann, op. cit., p. 506.

2 Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel, London, 1937, p. 172.

industries for the state and the vital necessity of permitting them to continue unhampered by governmental influence."³ At any rate, the story illustrates the boundless enthusiasm Deloney felt for the craft which he portrayed. It is throughout a highly idealized and romantic concept of the trade with which he was best acquainted. His enthusiasm, ability at character portrayal, and very intimate association with that craft combine to present a useful and realistic picture of the Elizabethan middle class individual. A close analysis of Jacke of Newberie with select references to the age in which he lived and wrote can best illustrate his importance as a chronicler of that segment of the English population known as the middle class.

The figure of John Winchomb, or Jacke of Newbury, has some basis in history, although it is mainly traditional. Fuller in his Worthies presents a description of Winchomb and the house in which he lived: some of the material is taken

3 Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the English Novel, New York, 1943, p. 12.

directly from Deloney's novel.⁴ The 1775 edition of Jacke of Newberie concluded with the information that "Mr. Winchombe lived many years, an ornament to society and a great promoter of the clothing branch. He built the tower with all the western part of the Newbury Church, and died Feb. 15, 1519, as appears by his epitaph still remaining in the church."⁵ According to Mann, Deloney must have been personally familiar with Newbury and its local history and traditions,

4 See Thomas Fuller, The History of the Worthies of England, London, 1811, p. 95: "John Wincombe, called commonly Jack of Newbury, was the most considerable Clothier (without fancy and fiction) England ever beheld. His looms were his lands, whereof he kept one hundred in his house, each managed by a man and a boy. In the expedition to Flodden-field against James King of Scotland he marched with an hundred of his own men (as well armed, and better clothed, than any) to shew that the painfull to use their hands in peace, could be valiant, and imploy their armes in War. He feasted King Henry the Eighth and his first Queen Katherine at his own house, extant at Newberry at this day, but divided into many tenements. Well may his house now make sixteen Clothiers houses, whose wealth would amount to six hundred of their estates. He built the Church of Newberry from the Pulpit Westward to the Tower inclusively: and died about the year 1520: some of his name and kindred of great wealth still remaining in this Country." p. 110-11: Both Francis and John Winchombe are listed as sheriffs of Berkshire in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

5 Mann, op. cit., p. 506.

inasmuch as his descriptions of the town and its inhabitants seem to have been derived from experience rather than from books.⁶

Considered as a complete work, Jacke of Newberie, is, by all modern standards, crude and unpolished. It leads off with a biographical account of Jack to which Deloney adds a number of incidents of uncertain origin. Structurally, it is episodic and therefore lacks the unity that has come to be associated with the novel as a form. It is not entirely formless, however, for it is held together by Deloney's attitudes and beliefs more than by conscious literary organization. For in this account of the craft with which he was best acquainted, Deloney presents the superior position of the clothiers in the light of those concepts which he holds to be of paramount importance: the domestic front, the solid home foundation upon which the social structure is built; the laboring scene, the employer-employee relationship through which the economic power of the commonwealth is increased; the understanding between the monarch and the subject, the

6 Ibid., p. 507.

mutual forbearance of citizen and king which provide the security essential to the well-being of both; and the idea of advancement, the will to get ahead which spurs members of the commonwealth to new economic conquests.

On the domestic front marriage assumes a position of major importance in Jacke of Newberie inasmuch as it provides the framework upon which Deloney can exhibit matters of equal or greater importance. As an apprentice to a broad-cloth weaver Jacke is held (though he were but poore) in good estimation". His opportunity for advancement in the business world comes when his master dies, thus causing his mistress to place the management in Jacke's able hands. His worthiness and dependability as an employee place him uppermost in the esteem of his lady, even though she is courted by a clerical gentleman, a tailor, and a tanner, for "shee had never a Prentise that yselded her more obedience than he did". His lack of gentle birth and worldly goods are no hindrance to his advancement, for his dame realizes fully that under his management her business has come "forward and prospered wondrous well". Once he has proved himself, Jacke is led

off to the church by his mistress and wed to her.⁷ When the new wife seeks to test Jacke's love by gadding about night and day and refusing to attend to her domestic affairs, the young husband locks her from the house. Her knocking arouses him from sleep and he reprimands her sharply (p. 17):⁸

What? is it you that keepes such a knocking? I pray you get hence, and request the Constable to provide you a bed, for this night you shall have no lodging here.

His wife tricks him to come out of the house, however, and turns the tables on him by locking him out in the cold. He finally spends the night sleeping with the apprentices. The next morning, his wife, fury abated, comes around with forgiveness and hot cowdle. After Jacke admits his wife's full sovereignty, the two of them live peacefully "till in the end she dies leaving her husband wondrous wealthy".

Having dispensed with the first Dame Winchomb, Jacke's initial stepping stone to success,

7 See Chapter III, *infra*, for a more detailed account of the strong willed wife, one of Delaney's favorite themes.

8 All quotations are taken from Mann, *op. cit.*

Deloney is free to exploit the character of the clothier in light of his own merits.⁹

After very sensibly training one of his servants in the "guiding of his house a yeare or two" and finding her careful, faithful, and an excellent housewife, Jacke opens his mind to her and craves her good will. The maiden promptly notifies her father, who "being joyfull of his daughters good fortune," hastens to Newberry to arrange for the marriage. Not long after Jacke's second marriage, an incident happens which threatens to upset the precious serenity of his home: a gossiping neighbor proffers some advice to the young wife which adversely affects the relationship

⁹ Where Jacke seemed a trifle blundering and dull-witted in his apprentice days, his acquisition of wealth and position made him an astute and clear-headed business man. The sudden metamorphosis is not unusual in Deloney's writing as his works are too short to allow full character delineation. He seems to never take full advantage of his opportunities for character portrayal in a psychological sense. Instead he presents an array of external idiosyncrasies which provide an inexhaustible field of speculation for the reader. Not infrequently his attempts at character delineation in the light of a number of illustrative actions lead him into digressions which are saved from tediousness only by his colorful descriptions and energetic presentation of incident.

between Jacke and his employees. This conversation between Dame Winchomb and her neighbor realistically deals with the state of the new marriage. With little change it could have taken place in any parlor; indeed, it takes place in many parlors to this very day (p. 53):

Good morrow good Gossip; now by my truly I am glad to see you in health. I pray you how doth master Winchombe? What neuer a great belly yet? no fie: by my fa your husband is waxt idle. Trust mee Gossip (saith mistresse Winchombe) a great belly comes sooner than a new coate; but you must consider we haue not beens long married....

In reality, Jacke has been a good husband; he is good and loving to his wife and she would not change him for a "lord Marquesee". Indeed, he is such a fine man that he has been chosen to be the burgess for the Parliament. He is not too pleased, however, about the appointment, for there are many duties connected with it that will take him from his business. Mistress Winchomb also points out to her neighbor the difficulty of getting used to her new role as a member of the secure middle class; she has never had so many worldly goods in her life. Her neighbor comforts her with the assumption which effectively sums up the attitudes of most of the

nouveaux riches by telling her that she is as much a lady as anyone born to the position. The neighbor, who is older and far more experienced, offers more advice calculated to aid the young woman in her domestic affairs. It is evident that the young woman does not understand how to treat her servants; she has a name throughout the country for feeding her menials in a grand style. If she were to follow the gossips' advice and use poorer commodities, she would save at least twenty pounds a year. When the good wife tries this method of saving money for her husband, she received an admonition from him for jeopardizing the fine relationship he has established with his employees. Inasmuch as Jacke himself has been an apprentice, he knows how they feel and has been practicing methods which will bring about the greatest efficiency and production (p. 56):

I will not have my people thus pinch of their victualls. Empty platters make greedy stomakes, and where scarcity is kept, hunger is nourished: and therefore wife as you love mee, let mee have no more of this doings.

No sooner has Jacke steered his own marriage into smoother domestic waters, than he is confronted with a problem which demanded matrimony as a fitting solution. The strong sense of moral

fitness which was later to solidify in the Puritan rule of England comes through eloquently in Jacke's treatment of the affair between one of his maids and Sir George Rigley. Sir George is made a knight after the Battle of Morlaix. Ordinarily, in medieval times, when a soldier was knighted he was provided with a demesne to support him. During the Elizabethan age the knighthood became more or less an honorary position and carried with it none of the material gains which it had previously brought. When the Elizabethan "knights" returned from war, someone had to be responsible for supporting them in a manner befitting warriors who had fought gallantly in the defense of the commonwealth and so many of the wealthy craftsmen took the soldiers into their homes and treated them handsomely for having added to the security of the country. It falls Jacke's lot to provide for Sir George Rigley, who uses his spare time wooing one of the many maidens who work in Jacke's house. The results were to run as follows (p. 64):

This lusty wench bee so allured with hope of marriage, that at length she yielded him her loue, and therewithall bent her whole study to worke his contents: but in the end, shee so much

contented him, that it wrought to her own discontent: to become high, she laid her self so low, that the Knight suddenly fell over her, which fall became the rising of her belly.

Upon learning of her condition, the poor girl complains to Sir George, who will have nothing to do with her. Calling her a "dunghill carrion", he quits Newberry and goes to London. Mistress Winchomb is next to learn of the situation, the news of which she immediately carries to her fond husband. To remedy the unfortunate situation, Jacke quickly goes to London and approaches Sir George with a tale of a widowed rich woman who will not wed because she fears she is with child by her recently deceased husband. Jacke advises Sir George to "ride to her, wooe her, winne her". The girl is set up in style in London by the clothier, and Sir George, who cannot see through her disguise, presses his suit with amazing vigor; however, the girl will have none of him except at the intervention of Master Winchomb. After the marriage, when Sir George learns of his wife's identity, he frets, fumes, stamps and stares "like a diuell". Jacke moralizes to him thusly (p. 67):

Why...what needs all this? Came you to my table to make my maide your strumpet? had you no mans house to

dishonour but mine? Sir, I would you should well know, that I account the poorest wench in my house too good to be your whore, were you ten knights; and seeing you tooke pleasure to make her your wanton, take it no scorne to make her your wife; and vse her well too, or you shall heare of it.

With the formalities in hand, Jacke provides the maid with a hundred pound dowry and invites the couple to live for two years at his house. The King, hearing of the incident, shows his approval of Jacke's move by providing the Knight with a perpetual livelihood, the better to "maintaine my lady his wife".

Some of the trouble on the domestic front was caused by the intrusion of forces which were not in sympathy with the Englishman's attitude toward moral stability in the home. In one such instance a foreigner threatens to upset the domestic tranquility of the home of one of Jacke's employees. One of the three maidens who waits upon Jacke's wife is Jean, a young lady from a wealthy and influential family.¹⁰ Jean's beauty has caught the roving eye of a wealthy young Italian, Benedict, who has come to Newberry to

¹⁰ High born children were often placed in the homes of wealthy merchants or craftsmen until they were ready to assume their role in life.

bargain with Jacke for cloth. Although he plies her with gifts, the girl will have nothing to do with him. For one thing, she is highly amused by his broken English. In fact, the only way she knows of his love for her is through his interminable sobbing and sighing to himself when he is near her. One of Joan's kinsmen, a robust fellow, states that no kinswomen of his shall have any commerce with an Italian. Upon hearing the Englishman's opinion, Benedict vows that he will be revenged. ¹¹ Going to the kinsman's house, Benedict eventually makes friends with him by lending him large sums of money. He is so courteous to the wife of the Englishman that the weaver

11 Placing the Italian in the amorous role which was to follow would have found favor with the middle class reader, for stories were legion of the vice in Italy and of the sinful nature of Italians in general. See, for example, Holinshed's Chronicles, III, 618; "Howbeit, the Frenchmen were not altogether oppressors of the Englishmen. For a Lombard called Francis de Bard, entised a mans wife in Lombard street to come to his chamber with hir husbands plate, which thing she did. After hir husband knew it he demanded his wife, but answer was made he should not haue her: then he demanded his plate and in like maner answer was made that he should haue neither plate nor wife. And when he had sued an action against the stranger in Guildhall, the stranger so faced the Englishman, that he fainted in his sute. The Lombard arrested the poore man for his wifes boord, while he kept hir from hir husband in his chamber."

repents for having spoken so ill of him and pronounces him a gentleman worthy of Joan. But Benedict is not to be deprived of his revenge; secretly he visits the weaver's wife and attempts to make merry with her. Thinking to complete his revenge, he confesses to Gillian, the wife, that he has quite forgotten Joan. He seeks to influence her with an offer of many fine gifts and Gillian displays the practical bent of her mind by considering the offers favorably (p. 49):

Shall I content my selfe to be
 wrapt in sheepes russet that may swim
 in silks, & sit all day carding for
 a groat, that can haue crownes at my
 command? No...I will no more beare
 so base a minde, but take Fortunes
 fauours while they are to be had....
 O glorious gold...how sweete is thy
 smell? how pleasing is thy sight?
 Thou subduest Princes, and ouer-
 throwest kingdomes, then how should
 a silly woman withstand thy strength?
 Thus she rested meditating on pre-
 ferment, purposing to hazard her
 honesty to maintaine her selfe in
 brauerie: euen as occupiers cor-
 rupt their consciences to gather
 riches

No sooner has Dame Gillian appointed a time for an assignation, than her conscience begins to trouble her. After meditating a long time, she tells her husband that she has trespassed against him in words, if not yet in deeds. When he learns

the details of the proposed meeting, he plans a fitting reception for the man who would dishonor his home. The Italian, arriving at night, is directed to a bed containing a young sow to which he makes passionate advances; however, he soon learns his mistake and rushes from the house into a group of townspeople assembled to witness his disgrace. The irate husband condemns him heartily before the group and orders him from the town (p. 53):

Sir (quoth hee) I knowing you
 loved mutton, thought porke nothing
 vnfit: & therefore prouided you a
 whole sow, and as you like this en-
 tertainment, spend Portegues. Walke,
 walke, Berkshire maides will be no
 Italians strumpets, nor the wiuues
 of Newberry their bauds. 12

Next to his home, the middle class Englishman loved his craft. He worked among his employees and knew their problems. Jacke of Newberie was Deloney's ideal employer; consequently, his relation with his employees could be considered as the most desirable one possible. On the occasion of Jacke's second marriage, his prospective father-in-law is shown around Jacke's domain and is

12 The meaning becomes clear when the reader realizes that "mutton" is being used in a second sense meaning "food for lust."

amazed by the size of Jacke's industrial setup
(p. 20):

Within one roome being large and long,
There stood two hundred Loomes full strong:
Two hundred men the truth is so,
Wrought in these Loomes all in a row.
...to another roome came they,
Where children were in poore array:
And euey one sate picking wool,
The finest from the course to cull:
The number was seven score and ten,
The children of poore silly men:
And these their labours to requite,
Had euey one a penny at night,
Which was to them a wondrous stay.

The father-in-law is ~~also~~ overwhelmed by the number of domestics who are put to work. They include a butcher, a baker, a brewer and five cooks. This cataloguing of Jacke's domain illustrates Deloney's interest in the show of material wealth in the form of instruments of production. The people for whom he was writing, "the well minded Clothiers," were naturally interested in the fine industrial machine of their ideal, and to them Jacke was the epitome of self-made success, the symbol of what they were striving for and could hope to attain.

On another occasion, the visit of the King to Jacke's house, the monarch is visibly stirred by the extent of Jacke's craft. The Queen displays her curiosity about the weaving industry

and asks to see the laborers at their tasks. The atmosphere of the establishment is so pleasant that the sovereigns are impressed at once. In one room they come upon a hundred looms with two men working at each and singing for joy at their work. The royal train moves along to view the spinning and carding women, "who for the most part were very faire and comely creatures". These maidens also are singing, because they enjoy their work so much. The King and Queen then proceed to the room where the dyers and fullers work (p. 36) and

perceiuing what a great number of people were by this one man set on worke, both admired and commended him, saying further, that no Trade in all the Land was so much to bee cherished and maintained as this, which...may well be called, The life of the poore.

In keeping with the Elizabethan love of pageantry, Jacke stages an allegory for the King's enjoyment, featuring many children dressed in white silk. The children are so exceedingly fair that the King and Queen demand to know who they are. Jacke confides that they are children of very poore people, "that doe get their liuing by picking of wooll, hauing scant a good meale in a week". The King counts the children and finds that there

are ninety-six of them. The Queen in her wisdom remarks that, "Certainly...I perceive God gives us faire children to the poore as to the rich, and fairer many times; and though their dyet and keeping bee but simple, the blessing of God doth cherish them". However, the children are much too fair to be left to the tender mercies of their natural environment, and so the Queen picks two for her chamber. The King takes an even dozen for pages and the rest of the noble party take the remaining children into their services (p. 38) so that,

(In the end) not one was left to plike weell, but were all provided for; so that their parents neuer needed to care for them; and God so blessed them, that each of them came to bee men of great account and authority in the Land, whose posterities remaine to this day worshipfull and famous. 13

13 Deloney, in his eagerness to exhibit Jack's sympathetic attitude toward human kind in general, had evidently forgotten that the Ciochier, in keeping with his generosity, should have provided his laboring children with more than one meal a week. The incident is another indication of the idealized picture that Deloney was trying to present. Undoubtedly the children were often forced to work long hours for wages that would scarcely provide food. It is certain that Deloney must have been hard pressed at times to construct so romantic a picture from some of the conditions that he had seen and experienced.

Contrasted with the unusually optimistic picture so far presented, there is the darker side to the business of weaving cloth. The wars having made the import or export of goods inadvisable, the clothmakers are forced to take certain actions: first, to reduce the wages of their workman; and second to discharge them for want of markets for their finished products. Following these, Deloney presents with graphic clarity the situation wherein "Many a poore man (for want of worke) is hereby undone, with his wife and children, and it makes many a poore widow to sit with a hungry belly". Jacke, realizing that emergency measures must be taken "in behalfe of the poore," decides to make supplication to the King. To add weight to his petition, he sends letters to the chief clothing towns

We must keep in mind, though, that this is a picture of ideal working conditions and their extremity in one direction might very often point to the opposite extreme in reality. Deloney does express his compassion for the children in the story, a compassion that in all likelihood he experienced when he saw the actual conditions. In an ideal situation the children would have been taken from the mill and placed in more suitable surroundings, and in our romance that is exactly what takes place when the King and nobles place the children in their households.

of England. With prophetic insight into the nature of the situation, Jacke tells the clothiers that they will never achieve their purpose unless they present a unified front. Unity will be difficult since, "The poore hate the rich, because they will not set them on worke; and the rich hate the poore, because they seeeme burdenuous; so that both are offended for want of gains". He expresses his pride in the craft in the letter which he sends to the clothiers (p.44):

Dear Friends, consider that our Trade will maintaine vs, if wee will vphold it: and there is nothing base, but that which is basely used.

His tactics are remarkable in their similarity to those employed by our modern day labor leaders when their means of living is in jeopardy. The clothiers are to assemble in their respective towns and air their grievances, after which they will contribute money to all court machinery and send two of their ablest men to London to meet with others and present their petition to the King. When Jacke has a census taken of the clothiers, he finds that sixty thousand persons earn their living at the clothing trade. Each town sends two persons so that one hundred twelve people are present in London to petition the King. After having noted their

grievances, the King commands that they be investigated and redressed for, "I account them in the number of my best Common-wealths men". When Cardinal Wolsey fails to act upon the situation, Jacke speaks out against him and is thrown into prison. To make certain that none of the group will petition for his release, Wolsey has every one of the weavers cast into prison along with Jacke. When, after having languished in prison for four days, the clothiers manage to make appeal to the King, some of Wolsey's friends in court keep the petition from the King. But one champion of the clothiers among the nobility, the Duke of Somerset (p. 46)¹⁴

spoke with the Lord Cardinall about the matter, wishing he would speedily release them, lest it breed him some displeasure: for you may perceiue (quoth the Duke) how highly the King esteemes men of that Faculty.

Yielding to the Duke's advice, Wolsey pardons the clothiers and grants their petition which

14. See Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 516: "The Duke of Somerset visited Newbury in 1537 and lodged at the house of Jacke of Newbury's son. His largesse to the carders on that occasion was seventeen shillings and sixpence (see Money's History of Newbury, p. 206). Hence tradition probably represented him to Deloney as a friend of the clothing trade."

allows them to trade freely among themselves and overseas.

Even when the trade, as a whole, was flourishing, individuals not infrequently suffered misfortunes. Apparently Deloney was not blind to the fact that good men sometimes failed in their business ventures even though they engaged in the clothing trade; however, he attributed it to the lack of cooperation among the businessmen and mismanagement on the part of the individual rather than to any inherent fault in the system. Jacke very appropriately took what Deloney considered to be the right action in the case of Randall Pert. Pert, a draper, owes Jacke five hundred pounds at a time when he is declared bankrupt and thrown into the debtors prison while his wife and children are turned out of doors and left to starve. All of his creditors, except Jacke, share in his goods and will not release him from prison as long as he has "one penny to satisfy them". When Jacke is advised by his friends to get as much as possible from the draper, he answers (p. 58):

May...if he not be able to pay men when he is at liberty, he will neuer be able to pay mee in prison: and therefore it were as good for me to forbear my money without troubling him as to adde more sorry to his griued heart, and be

neuer the neerer. Misery is troden
down by many, and once brought low,
they are seldome or neuer relieved;
therefore he shall rest for me vn-
tought, and I would to God he were
cleare of all other mens debts, so
that I gaue him mine to begin the
world againe.

Pert's story, told simply and completely, is one
of being knocked down and never being allowed to
rise again. His wife turns to drudgery and, when
he is released from prison, he has to become a
porter. Jacke, having been recently elected to
Parliament, comes to London and chances to stay
at the inn where Pert is working. The picture
that Deloney presents of him betrays a wretchedness
that has no place in an ideal commonwealth which
Deloney dreams of, for Pert is a sorry figure (p. 58),

having an old ragged doublet, and a
terne paire of breeches, with his hose
out at the heeles, and a paire of old
broken slip shoes on his feete, a
rope about his middle in stead of a
girdle, and on his head an old greasie
cap, which had so many holes in it,
that his haire started through it.

Again, Deloney points the moral by showing to
what state idleness can bring a man. The idea
that the economic system which he championed
could necessarily reduce some men to poverty
never occurred to him. Jacke has faith in the
business acumen of Pert and makes him sign a

note for the money to be paid when Pert becomes sheriff of London. He provides the broken man with clothes, a shop on the drapers' street and gives him a thousand pounds of cloth to start his business again. The help which he gives to Pert enables the draper to thrive in his business, become sheriff of London, and finally alderman. In the story of Pert, Deloney has once again shown that, despite the pitfalls man may encounter, they can always rise again if their fellow men will aid them and inspire in them an incentive to hard work and diligent effort.

However, even though the middle class businessman treated his employees well and cooperated with and aided other businessmen, he could not hope to prosper, if he did not command the sympathy and understanding of the monarch. In Jacke of Newberie Deloney makes much of the familiarity between the King and Jacke to point out the need for complete understanding on both sides. In one instance, while Henry VIII was at war in France, James of Scotland invades England, hoping to catch the country off guard. Although Jacke has been assessed to provide and equip only six men, he shows his true devotion and patriotic fervor by putting no less

than one hundred fifty brilliantly costumed men
 in the field with himself at the head of their
 ranks.¹⁵ The identification of the middle class
 with the king and other nobles to the greater
 glory of both is brought about to an even greater
 degree on the occasion of the King's visit to
 Jacke of Newberie's house.¹⁶ Jacke takes the
 opportunity to present his attitude of the monarch-
 subject relation to the King. He and thirty of
 his men outfit themselves in battle dress and
 vigorously defend an anthill, along the King's
 route, from an onslaught of moles, grasshoppers,
 and butterflies. Upon sending some men to dis-
 cover the meaning of this bizarre spectacle, the
 King learns that Jacke's actions are pregnant with
 allegorical import. Jacke is showing the conflict

15 The chapter heading lists two hundred fifty men which number has been quoted by most of the writers who have noted the incident; the actual account in the context, however, lists one hundred fifty and the Queen's later speech confirms this number.

16 This visit may not have originated with Deloney. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 513, notes: "The History of Newbury (1639), p. 139 regards the tradition that Henry the Eighth visited Jack at his house 'as deserving of credit'. Holinshed (II, 837) says: 'This summer' (1515) 'the king tooke his progresse westward, and visited his townes and castels there, and heard the complaints of his peere commonaltie'."

between the industrious and loyal workers and the slothful and gaudy courtiers who surround the king and influence him in their favor. It is not just, Jacke tells the monarch, that the workers who provide for the sustenance of the land should have to bear the oppression of the social butterflies who live on the bounty of the court. The workers, he continues, are afraid to stand up for their rights, because they are awed by the splendor of the courtiers. The King wisely takes Jacke's lesson to account "with great delight" and tells him that he is to be honored by the royal presence at his house.¹⁷ The royal visit is marred only when Cardinal Wolsey attempts to cause the King to distrust the clothier's motives.

17. The audacity of Jacke's acting in such a strange manner is likely to strike one as being utterly foolhardy, until he recalls that this is Deloney speaking and not Jacke of Newberry. The anthill episode is the kind of talking around a point that was relatively safe in Elizabethan England. It is in reality the plaintive wail of a cloth-maker out of work because of the decline of his profession brought about as the result of too much governmental interference. It is the writer picturing an ideal situation wherein the Clothier might approach his sovereign with his troubles and have them redressed immediately.

He is certain that Jacke is trying, crudely and dishonestly, to gain preference. A practical man, the Cardinal has a fool-proof way of testing the loyalty of Jacke and his kind (p. 30):

Let there be but a simple Subsidie levie upon them for the assistance of your Highnesse Warres, or any other weightie affaires of the Common-wealth and state of the Realme, though it bee not the twentieth part of their substance, they will so grudge and repine, that it is wonderfull: and like people desparage cry out, they bee quite vndone.

However, Jacke has a vigorous defender in the person of Queen Katherine who emerges from the background with the opinion (p. 30) that

...Jack of Newbery was neuer of that minde, nor is at this instant: if yee aske him, I warrant he will say so. My self also had a prooffe at the Scottish inuasion, at what time this man being seased but at sixe men, brought (at his owne cost) an hundred fiftie vnto the field.

For the moment the Cardinal is quieted and the King and Queen continue their feasting in the home of one of their honored subjects.

The fact that a working man could be honored by the presence of the monarch in his own home provided a great incentive for the craftsman to strive for greater economic gain. And even though not every successful craftsman could hope to

entertain the ruler, there were many privileges associated with economic success. The advancement from low degree to a high degree is set forth strongly in Jacks of Newberie, and the cloth-weaving profession is one way to achieve fame. Jacks is especially fond of pointing out to visitors the fifteen pictures that hang in his parlor with the purpose of illustrating the climb from low estate to high. ¹⁸ These pictures are shown to servants and guests to impress upon them the important positions to be gained by diligence, no matter how low their birth might have been. The great men are divided into three groups: Kings, Emperors, and Popes. As one might expect, two of the Emperors were directly connected with the weaving trade (p. 41):

The fourth was the similitude of Aelius Pertinax, sometime Emperour of Rome, yet was his father but a Weaver; and afterward, to give example of others of low condition to beare mindes of worthy men, he caused the whap to be beautified with Marble curiously cut, wherein his father was wont to

18 See Hyder E. Rollins, "Thomas Deloney's Euphuistic Learning and The Forest," PMLA L (1935), 679-86, for a discussion on Deloney's debt to Thomas Fortescue, author of The Forest, for the incident of the fifteen pictures.

Get his living...."

The eighth picture was of Marcus Aurelius, whom every age honoureth, he was so wise and prudent and Duperour; yet was he but a Cloth-weavers son.

Most amazing of all the inclusions into Jacke's picture gallery are the pictures of Pope John the Twenty-Second and Pope Sixtus the Fourth. It seems that Deloney's admiration for diligence over-shadowed, at least temporarily, his aversion to the Catholic Church (p. 41):

Next to this picture, was placed the pictures of two Popes of Rome, whose wisdoms and learning advanced them to that dignitie. The first was a lively Countersfeit of Pope John the 22 whose father was a Shoemaker; hee being elected Pope, increased their rents and partitioned Greatly.

The other was the picture of Pope Sixtus the fourth of that name, being a popes Mariners son.

Deloney makes no secret of the moralizing intent behind the inclusion of the story of the pictures. In Jacke's words he drives the lesson home (p. 42):

Seeing then my good servants, that these men haue been advanced to high estate and Princely dignities, by wisdoms, learning and diligence, I would wish you to imitate the like vertues, that you might attaine the like honours: for which of you doth know what good fortune God hath in store for you? There is none of you so poorely borne, but that men of

baser birth have come to great honours. The idle hand shall ever go in ragged garment, and the sloathfull live in reproach; but such as doe lead a vertuous life, and governe themselves discreetly, shall of the best be esteemed, and spend their daies in credit.

Throughout the novel of Jacke of Newberie,

Deloney pictures the ideal businessman, a man who realizes his responsibility to the state and, in turn, expects the state to respect his individual rights. He knows that, if peace and harmony reign in the home, the craftsman can go about his work in the most efficient manner. He realizes that he must treat his employee as he would be treated himself, in order to gain his good will and thereby increase the efficiency of his business. He understands that, in order to dispose of his goods to his advantage, he must have certain rights in the domestic and foreign markets; to that end he cultivates the friendship of the king. And he is certain that he can attain the finest kind of existence possible to man, if he follows faithfully the concepts which have proved their worth to him and those who came before him. Jacke is a splendid individualist, the man who personifies Deloney's ideal.

CHAPTER III

THE GENTLE CRAFT, Part I.

In 1597, Deloney also wrote the first part of The Gentle Craft, a eulogy of the shoemaking profession, an attempt to show "what famous men have been shoemakers in time past in this land, with their worthy deeds and Great Hospitality". It is, then, a pseudo-historical account made up largely of legend and tradition. Deloney obviously did not know the shoemaking craft as well as he knew the cloth-weaving trade, for he very noticeably omits the long passages describing the details of the craft so much in evidence in Jacks of Newberie. Throughout the disconnected narrative, he leans heavily upon source material and only slightly upon his own knowledge of the craft. Because of his lack of knowledge, The Gentle Craft is less important an indication of middle class than Jacks of Newberie in the variety and number of details. Since the book is largely history, it does not present the numerous characteristics of the bourgeoisie in action so noticeable in the book on the cloth

weavers, and yet, in part it provides the kind of mental attitude that created the typical Elizabethan businessman. Where the story of Jacke of Newberie cited a catalogue of attitudes making up the middle class mind, The Gentle Craft, especially in the story of Simon Eyre, shows an individual mind from that group in action.

The first part of The Gentle Craft is divided into three sections, each consisting of five chapters: the first section deals with the well-known legend of St. Hugh and St. Winifred; the second section with the traditional tale of Crispin and Crispianus; and the third section with the figure of Simon Eyre. The first five chapters on St. Hugh and St. Winifred are of an historical nature that has no place in this study and therefore will not be dealt with at this time; the second five chapters, while also of an historical nature, come closer to the problem at hand and touch upon the middle class attitude to a degree that necessitates their brief consideration; but the last five chapters treating of Simon Eyre are of prime importance, as they illustrate the unbridled indulgence of the acquisitive appetite found throughout the Elizabethan middle class and

so merit the closest examination.

Crispin and Crispianus, two young princes, deprived of their heritage when their country is captured by a foreign power, make their way into the hinterland in search of a suitable profession. One day while passing a shoemaker's cottage, they hear the happy shoemakers singing (p. 92) and

...perceiving such mirth to remain in so homely a cottage, judged by their pleasant notes, that their hearts were not cloyed with over many cares, and therefore wished it might be their good hap to be harboured in a place of such great content.

They are quite successful in their newly chosen profession and after many adventures they regain their princely identities and assume their former positions. The incident in their adventures which most clearly points up the utilitarian point of view found in DeLoney's prose works is that centering about the birth of Crispin's illegitimate child. Upon learning of the expected arrival of the child, Crispin immediately takes his problem to the wife of his employer whose reaction illustrates clearly that the economic improvidence of the act far overshadows any moral implications (p. 103):

What, how now (quoth she) has thou
 got a Maid with child? Ah thou whor-
 sen villian, thou has yndone thy selfe,
 how wilt thou do now? Thou has made
 a faire hand; here is now sixteen
 pence a week beside sope and candles,
 beds, shirts, biggins, wastcoats,
 headbands, swadlebands, crosse-clothes,
 bibe, tailcouts, mantles, hose, shoes,
 coats, petticoats, cradle and crickets,
 and beside that a standing-stale, and
 a peenet to make the child pap; all
 this is come vpon thee, be sides the
 charges of her lying-in. Oh Crispine,
 Crispine, I am heartily sorry for thee.

The situation is finally resolved when Crispin
 proves his identity, showing that he has a perfect
 right to marry a princess.

While the foregoing incident provides one ex-
 ample of the practical nature of the Elizabethan
 outlook, the tale of Simon Eyre presents a com-
 plete personification of the concept of individ-
 ualism which was finding favor in the middle class
 mind. Simon Eyre is the supreme example of the
 poor lad who arrives at success by raising him-
 self above the mass. The attempt to reconcile
 religious principles and the frankly individual-
 istic acquisitive instinct is noticeable through-
 out the entire episode; the opening paragraph
 seeks to justify one as the logical result of the
 other (p. 109):

Our English Chronicles do make mention that sometime there was in the honourable City of London a worthy Maior, known by the name of Sir Simon Eyre, whose fame liueth in the mouths of many men to this day, who, albeit he descended from mean parentage, yet, by Gods blessing, in the end he came to be a most worthy man in the commonwealth.

To Deloney's mind, the citizen did not exist except as a functioning unit of the greater commonwealth. In turn, the government of that commonwealth provided a secure position upon which business -- meaning the total commerce of the commonwealth -- could function adequately. Simon Eyre understood that ideal relation between the government and the man, and his story is the story of Deloney's well-rounded citizen.

The fundamental attitudes discussed previously in connection with Jacks of Newberie -- domestic matters, working conditions and attitudes, relation of subject and monarch, and the idea of advancement -- are all present in the story of Simon Eyre. Out of these attitudes arises the logical product of Deloney's ideal system. An examination of Eyre's rise to fame discloses the realization of Deloney's fondest beliefs. Through diligent application of those beliefs, Simon Eyre achieved a well-earned success.

He was off to a good start as an apprentice, because he approached his work in the right spirit and went about it (p. 110)

...with great delight, which quite excludeth all wearinesse; for when ser-vants do sit at their worke like Dromedaries, then their minds are neuer lightly vpon their businesse....

After his days as an apprentice he prospered well, for he knew the importance of integrating his domestic life and his craft. He labored diligently (p. 110)

...and his young wife was neuer idle, but straight when she had nothing to do, she sat in the shop and spun: and hauing lined thus alone a year or thereabout, and hauing gathered something together, at length he got him some printises, and a Iourney-man or two, and he could not make his ware so fast as he could haue sold it, so that he stood in great need of a Iourney-man or two more.

But despite Simon's diligence and hard work, he was not to experience the highest point of his prosperity until he cleverly took advantage of the opportunity afforded him through the misfortune of another. The incident of The Black Swan provided the opportunity for his advancement and his business sense enabled him to profit by the situation. To Eyre's great advantage it so happened (p. 111)

...that a ship of the Ile of Candy was driven upon our Coast, laden with all kind of Lawns and Cambricks, and other linnen cloths; which commodities at that time were in London very scant, and exceeding dear; and by reason of a great leak the ship had got at Sea, being unable to sail any further, the captain would make any profit he could of his goods....

It takes Simon's wife, who is "inflamed with desire" when she hears of the situation, to map his strategy for him. The fact that he does not possess the required three thousand pounds with which he can close the deal is no obstacle in his wife's eyes as she supplies him the answer (p. 113):

Tush man...what of that? every man that beholds a man in the face, knows not what he hath in his purse, and whatsoever he be that owes the goods, he will no doubt be content to stay a month for his money, or three weeks at the least: And, I promise you, to pay a thousand pounds a week is a pretty round payment, and, I may say to you, not to be misliked of.

In order properly to hoodwink the captain of the ship, Eyre contacts him early in the day as an honest shoemaker and later in the day, disguised as an alderman, so that he can give himself a fine recommendation. The deal is concluded on a note of credit basis and when Eyre sells part of the goods he pays the captain the three thousand

pounds. But his real profit is gained by using the surplus goods to advantage (p. 121), for

...resting to himselfe three times as much as he sold...he trusted some to one Alderman, and some to another, and a great deal amongst substantiall Merchants; and for some had much ready money, which he employed in divers merchandises: and became Adventurer at Sea, hauling (by God's blessing) many a prosperous volage, whereby his riches daily increased.

Casting up his accounts, Simon comes to the astounding discovery that he is a rich man by the standards of the time and he attributes his good fortune to God, modestly ignoring his own business tactics. He outlines his philosophy to his wife (p. 121):

The last day I did cast vp my accounts, and I finde that Almighty God of his Goodnesse hath lent me thirteen thousand pounds to maintain vs in our old age, for which his gracious Goodnesse towards vs, let vs with our whole hearts Give his glorious Maiesty eternall praise, and therewithall pray vnto him, that we may so dispose thereof, as may be to his honour, and the comfort of his poore members on earth, and aboue our neighbors may not be puffed up with pride, that, while we think on our wealth, we forget God that sent it to vs, for it hath been an old saying of a wise man, that abundance, of which God Give vs Grace to take heed, and Grant vs a contented mind.

The all-important idea of the duty existing between the king and subject --- the idea that

the citizen exists for the commonwealth and the commonwealth in turn repays him in security -- crops up in the tale of Simon Eyre, when the shoemaker tries to decline the post of sheriff of London. His wife immediately reminds him of his duty as a deserving citizen (p. 112):

...be thankfull vnto God for that you haue, and do not spurn at such promotion as God sendeth vnto you: the Lord be praised for it, you haue enough to discharge the place whereunto you are called with credit: and wherefore sendeth God goods, but therewithall to do him and your Countrey seruice?

Simon will not be fully convinced that he should assume the responsibility of the position, so his wife must explain still further his duty as a subject (p. 122):

Good Lord husband...what need all these repetitions? You need not tell me it is a matter of great charge: notwithstanding, I verily think many heretofore haue with great credit discharged the place, whose wealth hath not in any sort been answerable to your riches, and whose wits haue been as mean as your own: truly Sir shall I be plain? I know not anything that is to be spoken of, that you want to perforce it, but only your good will; and to lack good will to do your King and Countrey good were a signe of an vnworthy Subject, which I hope you will neuer be.

Since Simon is the very best of subjects, he accepts the position and goes from there to

that of Alderman, and finally he becomes Lord Mayor of London. Unlike Jacke of Newberie, Eyre accepts the honor of Knighthood (p. 133) and

buildded Leaden-Hall, appointing that in the midst thereof, there should be a market place kept every Munday for Leather, where the Shoemakers of London, for their more ease, might buy of the Tanners without seeking any further.

And in the end, this worthy man ended his life in London with great Honour.

II.

THE GENTLE CRAFT, Part II.

The second part of The Gentle Craft was written in 1597, the same year as the first part. Like the first part, it is divided into three sections, each dealing with a famous shoemaker: Richard Casteler, Master Peachey, and the Greene King.

The story of Richard Casteler relates the frustrated love affairs of two English girls who wish to marry the enterprising shoemaker and contains little material touching upon attitudes pertinent to this discussion; in two instances,

however, it illustrates points indicative of the middle class point of view: that of the intimate relationship of the workers with the king, and that of the humanitarian instincts generally associated with successful businessmen. In the first instance, Robin, a journeyman in the shop of Casteler, is so cunning in song that the King commands him and his fellow-workers to perform before the court. To show his good will (p. 169) the

...King cast them a purse with fifty faire angells for a reward, commending both their skill and good voyces, and after such pleasant communication, they had the liberty to depart; and when they came home, they told their Master all their merriment before the King....

In the second instance, the account of the disposition of Casteler's wealth upon his death shows his humanitarian bent (p. 170):

...at last, Richard Casteler dyed, and at his death he did diuers good and godly deeds: among many other things he gave to the City of Westminster a worthy gift to the cherishing of the poore inhabitants for ever. He also gave toward the reliefe of the poore fatherlesse children of Christs Hospitall in London, to the value of forty pound land by the yeere; and in the whole course of his life he was a very bountifull man to all the decayed housekeepers of that place, leaving behind him a worthy example for other men to follow.

Although Casteler achieves a high measure of success as a shoemaker, a fellow craftsman, Master Peachey, attains still greater eminence. Peachey takes the nobility of his craft to heart in such a manner as to incur the jealousy of those not associated with the shoemakers. He is so rich that he affects certain attitudes of the aristocracy, such as maintaining his workers in special livery which clearly identifies them with his household (p. 170):

...hee kept all the yeere forty tall men on worke, beside Prentises, and every one hee clothed in tawn coats, which he gaue as his liuery to them, all with black caps and yellow feathers; and every Sunday and holiday, when this gentleman-like citizen went to Church in his black gown garded with Veluet, it was his order to haue all his men in their liueries to wait vpon him....

When Tom Drum, a famous wandering shoemaker, comes to London, he seeks employment at Master Peachey's shop because he has heard that "Master Peachey of Fleet-street keeps continually forty men a work". and When Sir John Rainsford makes his way to London, he becomes associated with Peachey whose great renown has made him known throughout England. It is only fitting that a member of the true nobility should associate himself with a prince of the

the gentle craft in a partnership which clearly shows that the two classes share interests of sufficient importance to overshadow their differences of birth. Sir John has as profound a sense of the responsibility which wealth carries with it as Master Peachey, or any other rich craftsman. Before he came to London, Rainsford had kept a bountiful house and a large retinue of servants (p. 181) and

To all the poore round about where he dwelt, he was very charitable, relieving them daily both with money and meate; he was a famous Courtier, and in great fauer with the King, and the onely thing that disgraced his vertues, was this, that he was something wild in behauiour and wilfull in his attempts often repenting sadly what he committed rashly.

His banishment from his country estate had resulted from a rash act motivated by his fine sense of the rightful dignity of a human being. When he rides through a village, he comes upon a poor widow with five children begging money to pay a priest so that he will perform the burial rites over her deceased husband. Even at the insistence of Rainsford, the priest refuses to bury the man until he has his burial fee. Allowing himself to become a victim of his willful nature, the knight causes the priest to be buried

alive and sends for another priest who hastily performs the necessary rites. After the burial the knight gives the widow a gold angel and rides away, overcome by his rash act. In his flight from justice, Rainsford comes into the service of Peachey and is restored to his proper place only after having realized again his responsibility to the king and the commonwealth. Going to war in the contingent of men from Peachey's household, Sir Joh acquits himself so well in the service of his country that he wins a pardon from the monarch. As a sign of his respect for Peachey and his help in the battle to maintain and strengthen the commonwealth, the King confers a great honor upon him (p. 186):

Peachey was hereupon made the King's Shoemaker, who lived long after in great fauer and estimation, both with his Majesty & all the honourable Lords of the Court.

Instead of showing the fruits of diligence and hard work, the story of the Greene King illustrates the consequences of inactivity. Through lack of diligence and industry, the Greene King loses all of his money and is forced to sail to Holland in a futile attempt to recoup his losses. Before he embarks on his journey he is held up

to the scorn and ridicule of his neighbors and servants, all of whom have little use for a business man who cannot maintain his station in the world. The wife of the Greene King stays in town when her husband goes overseas and diligently applies herself to her husband's business so that she finally makes a comeback. When the husband returns from Holland, he takes over the business and lives to a prosperous old age. Even though he had fared badly in his early life, he was aware of his duty in alleviating the misery around him, and upon his death "he had done many good deeds to divers poore men".

The main points brought out in The Gentle Craft center about the necessity of diligent application to duty, and a certain respect for the Christian concepts of business ethics. Simon Eyre works diligently throughout his life, but he always modestly admits that, without the help of God, he could not have been such a striking success. In the episode of Master Peachey, the shoemaker has reached that advancement in social stature for which the middle class citizen is constantly striving. In all of the episodes there is pictured the bountiful life of shoemakers who have realized their proper place in the business world.

CHAPTER IV

THOMAS OF READING

Although the exact date of the publication of Thomas of Reading is not known, it was surely written after Jacks of Newberie and probably followed The Gentle Craft, parts I and II.¹ While the book purports to be an account of the "Sixe Worthie Yeoman of the West," it deals only slightly with the six famous clothiers, and consists mainly of scattered bits of information concerning the clothing trade. In fastening his material together, Deloney uses three main themes which he breaks into various short chapters, inserting the chapters at intervals in an awkward attempt at some kind of meaningful artistic unity combining the tales into one story:

¹ According to Mann, op. cit., p. 547, Thomas of Reading was written in 1598 or 1599. The structure of the story indicates that Deloney was making use of material about the clothiers which would not fit properly into Jacks of Newberie and could be used in much the same manner as the material he sets forth in The Gentle Craft.

the first and most important theme is that which tells of the close relationship existing between the ideal monarch and his subjects, a theme noted throughout the three novels, but evidenced to a much greater extent in this last story; the second is that which deals with the domestic scene and its importance to the middle class citizen and; the third is of a historical nature and deals with the ill-fated love of Duke Robert and the fair maid, Margaret. Since this last theme is a fictionized historical romance, it contributes little to the investigation of the middle class attitudes and will not be considered here.

The bond between the monarch and the people, especially the clothiers, discussed in the chapter on Jacke of Newberia, reappears in Thomas of Reading and takes precedence over any other topic. Since the clothing trade contributed substantially to the economy of the land, it is only natural that the good king should consider it of prime importance. Back in "the good old days", Deloney tells us the king did realize the importance of the clothing trade (p. 213):

In the dayes of King Henry the first... there lived nine men, which for the trade of Clothing, were famous throughout all

England. Which Art in those daies was held in high reputation, both in respect of the great riches that thereby was gotten, as also of the benefite it brought to the whole Common-walth: the yonger sons of Knights and Gentlemen, to whom their Fathers could leaue no lands, were most commonly preferred to learn this trade, to the end that thereby they might liue in good estate, & driue forth their daies in prosperity.

Indeed, the craft was so important that the country could scarcely have existed as a functioning unit without it, for "one half of the people in the land liue in those daies thereby".

The King first became aware of the enormity of the cloth trade when he was confronted by the "great number of waines loaden with cloath, coming to London". So many of the wagons met the King's party (p. 214) that

he with the rest of his traine, were faine to stand as close to the hedge whilst the carts passed by, the which at that time being in number aboue two hundred, was neere hand an houre ere the King could get roome to be gone...he said he thought Old Cole had got a Commission for all the carts in the country to carry his cloth.

The sight of so many wagons carrying produce to the markets of London and thence to foreign countries to bolster the economy of the nation moved the King to express his sentiments to the company (p. 215):

...he said to his Nobles, That it would neuer grieue a King to die for the defence of a fertile Countrie and faithfull subiects. I alwaies thought (quoth he) that Englands valer was more than her wealth, yet now I see her wealth sufficient to maintaine her valour, which I will seeke to cherish all I may, and with my sword keepe my self in possession of that I haue....

When Henry was forced to go off to the wars, he entrusted the realm to the Bishop of Salisbury, who called the clothiers to him and stated the working agreement between the monarch and the clothiers (p. 226):

The strength of a King is in the loue and friendship of his people, and he gouernes ouer his Realme most surely, that ruleth iustice with mercy: for he ought to feare many, whom many do feare: therefore the gouernors of the Commonwealth ought to obserue two specially precepts: the one is, that they so maintain the profit of the Commons, that whatsoever in their calling they doe, they referre it thereunto: the other, that they be alwaies as well carefull ouer the whole Common-wealth as ouer any part thereof lest while they vphold the one, the other be brought vutter decay.

After stating the policy which guides the good King in his actions toward the realm, the Bishop gives an excellent example of the practical application of friendship that fosters good relations (p. 226):

As I doe understand says the Bishop you the Clothiers of England are no small benefit to the Wealth publique, I thought it good to know from your owne mouths if there be anything not yet granted that may benefit you, or any other thing to be removed that doth hurt you.

The clothiers, responding readily to the display of democratic action, present three problems to the Bishop for the King's consideration: since the several cloth measures in use cause much trouble and hardship, a uniform cloth measure should be established by the King; because people will not accept cracked money, which is just as good as any exchange in the realm, a policy for exchange should be announced by the monarch; and as the thieves in the town of Halifax are not in sufficient awe of the existing laws, stricter regulation is necessary. If the clothiers are to maintain their living, As soon as the King returns from the war, he issues decrees which take care of the existing problems: calling for a staff, he measures his arm upon it and proclaims that measure to be a yard, a measure to be used under pain of imprisonment; he decrees that only cracked money is current throughout the land, so that all good money will have to be able to comply with the regulations; and he maintains that whoever shall be found

stealing cloth in the town of Halifax shall be hanged. After having redressed their grievances, the King once again lays down his policy concerning the best possible relation between the clothiers and himself (pp. 227-28):

Thus...haue I granted what you request, and if hereafter you find any other thing that may be good for you, it shall be granted; for no longer would I desire to liue among you, then I haue care for the good of the Common-wealth, at which word ended, the King rose from his royall throne, while the Clothiers on their knees prayed for both his health and happy successe, & shewed themselues most thankfull for his highnesse fauor.

The clothiers are so impressed with the King's attitude that they arrange a great banquet where they entertain the King's sons who think it not at all amiss to dine with a group of craftsmen.

The clothiers not only cooperated with the King on the domestic front; they also showed their good will by aiding him in his wars abroad (p. 240):

The Kings Maiestic being at the warres in Fraunce...the Cloethiers at their owne proper cost set out a great number, of soldiers and sent them ouer to the King.

The war, having been won with the help of the clothiers, the King comes back to England and makes one of his many progresses throughout the land. Wherever he journeys he is met by the clothiers and entertained in a most lavish manner (p. 241):

The King being thus come home, after his winter rest, he made his summers progresse into the west countrey, to take a view of all the chiefe townes: whereof the Cloethiers being aduertised, they made great preparation against his coming, because he had promised to visite them all.

And when his Grace came to Reading he was entertained and receiued with great ioy and triumph....

During the journey he visits the whole of the west countries and is "wondrously delighted, to see those people so diligent to apply their business". One cloethier has fashioned an arbor of red and white roses under which the royal party must pass. He has also caused sweet music to be played when the company approaches. "All which when his Grace vnderstood was done at the cost of a Cloethier, he said hee was the most honoured by these men, aboue all the meane subjects in his land."

These were the days when the King understood the problems of the business man. He knew that they could take care of their own businesses and support his reign as long as he fought the battles of the country and maintained the security on the domestic front. For the domestic front was of the utmost importance to the Elizabethan middle class citizen. If there were troubles at home, the home craft suffered and eventually the Commonwealth suffered. The home was the basic unit in

the developing economy and it had to be secured against all disrupting influences. Since the husband had to look after his craft and develop his trade, it was up to the wife to maintain the home and thus relieve her husband of any anxiety on that account. Delaney gives such attention to the affairs of women, especially as regards their reaction to their status in a society which was rapidly changing as their husbands climbed higher on the road to economic success.

Fair Margaret, the Earl of Shrewsbury's daughter, was forced to hire out as a maid, inasmuch as her father had been banished from the country and his estates had been confiscated. The other girls she met at the fair where she had gone to seek domestic service were amazed when they discovered how worthless an object she was (p. 223):

Why what can you doe (quoth the Maidens)
can you brew and bake, make butter and
cheese, and reape corne well?

No verily (quoth Margaret) but I would
be right glad to learne to doe anything
whatsoever it be:

If you could spin or card (said another)
you might do excellent well with a clothier,
for they are the best seruises that I
know, there you shall be sure to fare
well, and so liue merilly.

Unfortunately Margaret could do none of the things suggested; she could only read and write. The other maidens gave up finally and told her to behave

mannerly and she would probably get some kind of position. Because of her honesty in admitting that she knew nothing about domestic service and her willingness to learn, she was finally taken into the service of the clothier, Gray of Gloucester.

While the wives of the middle class gentlemen were usually most helpful to their husband's advancements, they very soon became aware of the effect of their rising wealth upon their social positions. It was not long before they discovered how the wealth they were acquiring could make them admired and respected by those less fortunate or diligent. When a group of Clothiers' wives took a trip to London, they were amazed at the many things they could buy (p. 234):

Now when they were brought into Cheapside, there with great wonder they beheld the shops of the Goldsmiths; and on the other side, the wealthy Mercers, whose shoppes shined with all sorts of coloured silkes; in Watlingstreet they viewed the great number of Drapers; in Saint Martins Shoemakers; at Saint Nicholas Church, the flesh shambles; at the end of the old Change, the fishmongers; in Candleweeke streets the weavers; then came into Iewes streete, where all the Iewes did inhabite; then came they into Blackwell hall, where the cuntry Clothiers did vse to meete.

They went on through London making a tour which included all of the "sights", such as the steeple of St. Pauls Church, and the Tower of London.

After having been entertained by the city weavers, the wives of the country weavers began to complain about that treatment afforded them by their husbands (p. 237):

Especially Simons wife of South-hampton, who told the rest of her gos-sips, that she saw no reason, but that their husbands should maintaine them, aswell as the Merchants did their wiuens: for I tell you what (quoth she) we are as proper women (in my conceit) as the proudest of them all, as hand-some of body, as faire of face, our legs as well made, and our feet as fine: then what reason is there (Seeing our husbands are of as good wealth,) but we should be as well maintained.

From that time on the peace of the domestic scene was in jeopardy. No wife was to be content until she could emulate the dress of the London women. London, the wealthiest city in the realm, began to exert its influence upon the whole of the country. When the bourgeois wife in the city graduated to silks, then must her country counterpart be attired as fitly (p. 238):

What a coyle keeps you says the wife of Simon of South-hampton are not we Gods creatures as well as Londoners? and the Kings subjects, aswell as they? then finding our wealth to be as good as theirs, why should we not goe as gay as Londoners?....why man, a Cobler there keepes his wife better then the best Clothier in this Country....

When entreaties such as this failed to move the husband, the wife immediately became ill and would not budge from her bed until her spouse promised to outfit her as well as the London women. Once she gained her point, however, she was not content unless the clothes she wore came from Cheapside (p. 240) and

...having thus wonne her husband to her will, when the rest of the Clothiers wives heard thereof, they would be suted in the like sort too; so that euer since, the wives of South-hampton, Salisbury, of Gloucester, Worcester, and Reading, went all as gallant and as braue as any Londoners wives.

Women were finally coming into their own. They contributed largely to the establishment of the family fortunes, so they felt that they should reap their share of the economic harvest.

The pattern displayed in Thomas of Reading of the relation of the King to his subjects expresses the ideal relationship between the ruler and his people. The perfect ruler travels through his realm to see firsthand just what is taking place; he talks with his subjects and learns their needs so that he can rule as well as possible; and he sits down with them to dine and treats them with respect due loyal subjects. Although Henry VIII and Elizabeth did make frequent progresses, and

although they did cater to the growing middle class population, too often they sought to establish governmental regulations which restricted the freedom of the business man to pursue his craft in his own way. By pointing back to the "good old days" of Henry I, DeLency could safely express the wishes of the craftsmen for a return to the freedom of former times. But the men were not the only ones who wished for a freedom to pursue their interests in their own ways; the women had ideas along the same line. They learned that they could become "ladies" if they had the wealth to maintain their position. They discovered what they had been suspecting for a long time; that the amount of their wealth bore a direct relation to their being accepted into a more select society. A new aristocracy was being formed in England, the aristocracy of the pound, an aristocracy which would grow and flourish and ultimately disassociate itself from the crafts in which it had found its origin.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

No society, past or present, can be appraised fully within the narrow limits of a single concept, especially when that concept results from the survey of one or two aspects of that society. All areas of activity, including the social, political, religious, and economic must be considered critically and the resultant observations carefully correlated in order to produce a meaningful evaluation. To maintain the proposition that the whole of the society of Elizabethan England can be explained and evaluated in the terms of the attitudes and opinions of the middle class citizen would be absurd. Traditional patterns of thinking and acting were still in force in England at the time of Elizabeth's reign, and it would take many generations of economic and commercial evolution to remove the last vestiges of medieval thought from the English mind. However, the increased tempo of business activity, especially evident

during the Tudor period and reaching a climax in the Elizabethan era, produced a profound change in the attitudes of Englishmen, a change which established new values affecting the lives and thoughts of the English citizens from that day forward. England, in the process of losing its agrarian identity, was gradually assuming the characteristics of a powerful, commercial nation, a nation struggling to adjust to a series of diverse problems of considerable complexity. While citizens from every class, peasants and aristocrats, were affected by the problems of a rapidly expanding and changing society, one class stands out from the rest by reason of its peculiar relation to the economic evolution at hand; for the middle class can be said to have been a natural outgrowth of the changing economic picture. The shift from an agricultural economy to a commercial economy created a class of shop-keepers, merchants, and independent craftsmen who performed services which had heretofore been capably rendered by serfs and menials in the employ of feudal lords. As the middle class grew in numbers and strength, it formulated a way of life, a series of attitudes and opinions which, in

effect, regulated the activities of its members to the end that an approved and recognized set of standards was established by which the class could be expected to grow and flourish. To a student of economic history, the power of these middle class standards of conduct is immediately apparent through the observation of their effectiveness in the field of business endeavor. To the student of literature, however, the effect of middle class thought is far less obvious, because of the rigid control of literature exercised by the court and the universities. Not until the eighteenth century, in fact, when the author finally becomes a skilled practitioner in a recognized profession does literature begin to reflect to any great extent the tastes and preferences of an audience of any considerable size. Even though the great body of English literature of the Elizabethan age fails to present the opinions of a class which was fast rising to a position of dominance on the economic front, the evangelic spirit of the middle class found expression in the crude offerings of a few writers who catered to the less exacting tastes of their special audience.

Within this group of literary unknowns, Thomas Deloney occupies an outstanding position. Deloney, a weaver, was naturally interested in the attitudes of the class of which he was an enthusiastic member. No literary artist, he was not hampered by artificial artistic limitations; he could and did present a picture of the life around him restricted only by his creative imagination. The people he writes about are real people, living in a very real world, dealing with real life problems. The way in which they meet those problems and solve them will point the direction for generations to come. And as the middle class citizen achieves a position of economic superiority in the western world, he will eventually demand a literature which is compatible with the way of life that has given him his being.

A thorough investigation of Deloney's three prose novels soon reveals his one main interest: that of revealing the importance of the middle class citizen to the state in which he lives. By presenting realistic pictures of the people and trades with which he is familiar, and by showing the "good life" which results from their earnest endeavors, he seeks to justify their existence

as the most important members of the rapidly expanding commonwealth. Upon evaluation, the several dominant themes which appear throughout Deloney's works point to his having in mind a fairly well organized concept of not only what the middle class citizen was, but naturally also what he should be if he were to achieve the success that could be his. In like manner Deloney also professes to know just what conditions favor the expansion and development of the various crafts with which he is acquainted. In a word, then, Deloney confidently expresses in his writing, his Utopia, an ideal commonwealth in which the individual citizen can realize his greatest worth to himself and his state. His treatment of historical figures and events, for example, illustrates his effective use of material to his desired purposes. For he is historically accurate only when accuracy establishes the point for which he is striving. At times he takes the greatest liberties with history, but always to the end that basic harmony is achieved between the citizen and the ideal commonwealth. The several attitudes or opinions which Deloney believes contribute directly to his ideal state are: the peace and security of the home,

fostered by perfect domestic felicity; favorable working conditions, arrived at through an understanding of mutual needs by the employer and employee; and an unwritten contract between the monarch and the subject, each retaining the rights and powers which best serve the interests of both -- qualifications leading to the natural advancement and development of the individual to a position which will reflect glory on himself and thence to the commonwealth. The full realization of the individual depends, of course, on a certain amount of natural ability -- the degree of ability determining the position of the individual in the society -- working in a harmonious relationship with God.

Despite the crude style of Deloney's work, his philosophy comes through clearly; at no time does the material he uses come into dispute with the theory he holds. Subsequent events have established the pragmatic value of the attitudes which he set down as the standards of the middle class citizen about whom and for whom he wrote. He did not have the knowledge or perspective to be a prophet; he was simply a voice of the times, giving utterance to an attitude which eventually swept over the western world.

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