Madeira, the "dagos" and the Other Winston Churchill

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If the name Winston Churchill were mentioned in the United States before the Great War, the image which would have come to mind would almost certainly have been that of the American author of best-selling novels[1] rather than the young English politician, whose stature grew as his namesake's bright but short-lived star began to fade. Ironically, over half a century after his death, Winston Spencer Churchill remains a household name, whilst Winston Churchill, the most successful novelist of his day, was forgotten in his own lifetime. This article revisits the work of the American author, whose novels, if nothing else, were a bellwether for the literary tastes of a generation.

The two Churchills met for the first time in December 1900, in Boston, where the Englishman was lecturing on his escapades in the first Boer War.[2] Prior to the meeting they had exchanged correspondence due to the confusion which had already arisen regarding the authorship of their respective published works and, in deference to the American's already considerable reputation as a writer of fiction,

1. "Only one of his [Churchill's] nine novels failed to rank among the top ten; five led the annual list, two were second, one was third." (Hackett 1945, 11ff)
2. The meeting took place on December 17th 1900. Winston Spencer Churchill lectured in 32 different cities.

the Englishman had volunteered, in an amusing letter,[3] to use the name Winston Spencer Churchill to prevent further embarrassments:

> Mr. Winston Churchill presents his compliments to Mr. Winston Churchill, and begs to draw his attention to a matter which concerns them both. He has learnt from the Press notices that Mr. Winston Churchill proposes to bring out another novel, entitled *Richard Carvel*, which is certain to have a considerable sale both in England and America. Mr. Winston Churchill is also the author of a novel now being published in serial form in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and for which he anticipates some sale both in England and America. He also proposes to publish on the 1st of October another military chronicle on the Soudan War. He has no doubt that Mr. Winston Churchill will recognise from this letter – if indeed by no other means – that there is grave danger of his works being mistaken for those of Mr. Winston Churchill. He feels sure that Mr. Winston Churchill desires this as little as he does himself. In future to avoid mistakes as far as possible, Mr. Winston Churchill has decided to sign all published articles, stories, or other work, "Winston Spencer Churchill", and not "Winston Churchill" as formerly. (1930, 232-33)

Fig. 1 – Winston Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) and Winston Churchill (1871-1947).

3. WSC to WC, June 7th 1899.

The following day's *Baltimore Sun* revealed that the two first met in Winston Spencer Churchill's room at the Hotel Touraine, and that, to his surprise, the American had found the Englishman recovering in bed from his exertions of the previous day. They met again for lunch, and afterwards strolled together over Boston Common where they discussed the possibility that the American author might embark on a political career parallel to his writing, an idea which, at the time, he had not considered.[4] Later that day he attended Churchill's lecture at the Tremont Temple and that same evening invited the Englishman to "a very gay banquet of young men" at the exclusive Somerset Club. Despite the friendly terms on which they parted and their mutual promises to "cultivate each other's acquaintance" their paths would cross only once again.[5]

Apart from their two meetings, their mutual interest in politics and the confusion surrounding the authorship of their books, which, decades later, is still exploited by publishers and booksellers, there are few points of contact between the lives of the two men. In an amusing coincidence, however, both Churchills have an association with the island of Madeira.

Winston Spencer Churchill first visited the island in October 1899 when, as a war correspondent for the *Morning Post*, he travelled on the same ship as Sir Redvers Buller, who was on his way to take command of British Forces in the Transvaal.[6] The first leg of the journey was to Funchal, where the Royal Mail liner docked to take on provisions. Churchill confessed in private correspondence that, due to the rough seas, he had suffered a severe bout of sea-sickness and the brief stay

4. Winston Churchill was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives, where he served from 1903 to 1905. An admirer of Theodore Roosevelt, he ran as a "progressive" the following year but was unsuccessful in securing the Republican nomination for the Governorship of New Hampshire. He failed to gain election once again in 1912, this time as the candidate for Roosevelt's Progressive Party.

5. See Cohen, *Winston Churchill, meet Winston Churchill*: https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-190/winston-churchill-meet-winston-churchill/. Cohen does not appear to have been aware of their second encounter in London in 1902.

6. As he recalls in the first volume of his memoirs, *My Early Life,* there was no wireless in those days and they "dropped completely out of the world" for the duration of the voyage. The Dunottar Castle docked in Funchal on 17th October 1899.

onshore had offered a welcome respite.[7] It would be another fifty years before he set foot on the island again – at the height of his fame as an author and former Prime Minister.

Churchill's second visit to Madeira took place on January 1st 1950, at the invitation of the Blandy family, ostensibly to celebrate the re-opening of Reid's Palace Hotel in Funchal which they owned and had been forced to close during the War. Intending to stay for several weeks, he was accompanied by his wife Clementine, his daughter Diana, two secretaries, his literary assistant and his personal detective. Churchill's stay was, however cut short by the announcement of elections on February 23rd, which returned the Tories to power. The visit was a public relations coup for Salazar's Estado Novo regime and a disappointing set-back for those in the democratic opposition who still believed that a transition to democracy in Portugal and Spain might be brought about with the support of the nations who had defeated fascism. Sadly, a whole generation would go by before the dictatorship was overthrown in a military coup. A documentary film entitled *Churchill na Madeira*, made for television by Joana Pontes, includes interviews with several of those who met Churchill and his wife.

The American author's association with Madeira also dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. His first published story – "Mr. Keegan's Elopement", which appeared in the *Century* magazine in June 1896, (215-228) was set on the island and revolved around the romantic relationship of an officer in the U.S. Navy with a young English woman and the humorous arrangements for their elopement which were made behind his back by two of his subordinates from the ship's crew. "Mr. Keegan's Elopement" was intended as the first of a series of short stories featuring the exploits of Dennis Keegan, a petty-officer of Irish extraction, which would draw upon Churchill's brief but life-changing experience of the Navy.

Winston Churchill attended the Naval Academy at Annapolis between 1890 and 1894 and though a popular cadet who made a

7. WSC wrote to his mother: "We have had a nasty rough voyage and I have been grievously sick."

reputation for his athletic prowess rather than for his academic achievements, he realised that he was not cut out for a naval career and at the end of the course he resigned his commission. After leaving the Academy, where he had already written several short stories, Churchill worked briefly at the *Army and Navy Magazine* before moving on to the post of managing editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, leaving after his marriage in 1895 to the St. Louis heiress, Mabel Harlakenden Hall,[8] whose inheritance provided the financial independence he required to launch his own literary career.

In September 1896, on his return from an extended honeymoon trip to Europe, Churchill submitted two more "naval stories" to the *Century Illustrated Magazine*,[9] one of which, a more ambitious piece entitled "By Order of the Admiral. A Story of the Times", was published in July 1898. (Vol. LVI, No. 3, 323-342) In the words of Robert Schneider, Churchill's biographer, these early stories were little more than "pleasant little excursions into a land of noble men and Gibson girls" in which "the settings were always more credible than the characters". (1976, 23)[10] Typical of the light, romantic genre which was the magazine's literary trademark, both "Mr. Keegan's Elopement" and "By Order of the Admiral" were accompanied by drawings made by the illustrator and portrait painter Benjamin West Clinedinst (1859-1931).

Tastes in reading matter were changing, however. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a growing public interest in politics, history and, more particularly, the story of America itself, coincided with a gradual decline in the public appeal of the romantic novel.[11] Churchill, who seemed to have the uncanny knack of anticipating his readers' preferences, turned his hand to historical fiction. His first two

8. Mabel Harlakenden Hall's late father had owned the Sligo iron mine in Missouri.
9. The magazine was published monthly in NYC between 1881 and 1930.
10. "Gibson girls" refers to the idealised pen-and-ink drawings of attractive young women made by Charles Dana Gibson (1867-1944) at the end of the nineteenth century.
11. Richard and Beatrice Hofstadter, in "Winston Churchill: A Study in the Popular Novel", draw attention to the fact that the majority of readers of novels at the time were women and that Churchill was sensitive to their changing tastes and role in society: "But while politics was a man's world, the novel-reading public was overwhelmingly feminine. It was Churchill's function as a novelist for a female public that was becoming more and more concerned with men's affairs to refract the problems of the age from the point of view of women." (*American Quarterly*, Spring 1950, vol. 2, no. 1, 15)

full-length novels – *The Celebrity: An Episode* – a satirical tale about a famous novelist who temporarily adopts a different identity in order to remain incognito,[12] and *Richard Carvel*, a well-researched epic set in the American War of Independence, were published in 1898 and 1899 to favourable reviews. The latter eventually sold over two million copies – a remarkable achievement in a country of fewer than 80 million people – and in 1901 it would run on Broadway as a successful musical play.[13]

The extraordinary reception of the two novels inevitably put an end to Churchill's plan to publish a series of stories based on his naval experiences.[14] Conscious that he was riding on the crest of a wave, he was already making preparations to launch a new historical novel about the American Civil War, which would be set in Maryland and in England. Published in 1901, *The Crisis* capitalised on the resounding success of the two previous books, selling a hundred thousand copies in six days and quickly rising to the top of the year's list of best-sellers in the United States.[15] Praised by reviewers for its treatment of historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln, it would also be made into a Broadway play, as would *The Crossing*, Winston Churchill's final historical novel, published in 1904, which retold the story of American expansion westwards and the settlement of Kentucky.[16]

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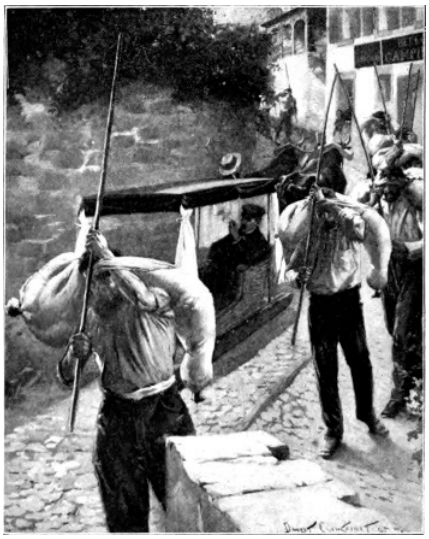
12. Robert Schneider notes that the success of *The Celebrity* was due to the fact that "the book was widely interpreted as an attack on the literary darling of the age, Richard Harding Davis". (1976, 30)
13. With John Drew Jr., the leading matinee idol of his day in the title role, the four-act play would run at the Empire Theatre in NYC for 128 performances between September 1900 and January 1901. A silent film based on the novel was begun in 1915 with Francis X. Bushman in the title role but it appears not to have reached completion.
14. On the 24th April 1898, Churchill had set out his plans in a letter to Albert Shaw (1857-1947), the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, a leading literary and political magazine: "I have mapped out my naval stories. The same characters are to run through nearly all, and they are to have few or no women in them. I have taken types of all the naval officers which have come under my observation, from the gruff admiral and silent, bull-dog captain to the dashing young Ensign – nor have I left the *mechanical* element out (...). This inventive genius of the Yankee sailor coupled with his Anglo-Saxon fighting qualities, seems to me an invincible combination." (*Apud* Schneider 1976, 45; underlined in the original)
15. Adapted for the stage the following year, *The Crisis* ran for 50 performances at Wallack's Theatre in NYC and in 1916 the novel was made into a film by the prolific director Colin Campbell. On the 23rd December 1916, Thomas Edison wrote of the film in *New York Evening Mail*: "In *The Crisis* we have the titanic figure of Lincoln, his actions, his characteristics preserved for posterity in moving pictures in a manner so true to life that it recalls to my mind the great emancipator as I knew him." (*Apud* Schneider 1976, 199)
16. Illustrated by Sydney Adamson and Lilian Bayliss. Churchill's adaptation (with Louis Evan Shipman) would run at Daly's Theatre on Broadway for only eight performances in January 1906.

In the wake of all this success, *Mr. Keegan's Elopement* was republished in 1903 as a hard-cover edition by Macmillan and Co. with Clinedinst's illustrations continuing to play a fundamental role in transporting the reader to the exotic setting of the novelette. Some uncertainty, as to whether Churchill actually went to Madeira before writing *Mr. Keegan's Elopement*, has persisted, as he made no reference to the journey in his many interviews,[17] but the evidence clearly points in this direction. Churchill very probably visited the island towards the end of his course at Annapolis, as the Naval Academy's three-masted schooner – the Monongahela, made annual training cruises to Europe in the eighteen-nineties, which included short stays in Funchal.[18] Further support for this theory is provided by Churchill's vivid description of the sighting of the island from the sea, which bears the stamp of an eye-witness account:

> In the east the October sun was just beginning to peep over the sealine, while to the northward lay the great mountain island of Madeira, already changing, by the magic touch of the light, from a phantom grey to that living green so dear to the eyes of a seaman. Soon signs of life began to appear; a village could be made out nestling in each of the valleys which furrowed the mountain side, while yellow villas dotted its wooded slopes. In a bight at the south base, white in the morning sunlight lay the town of Funchal, in front of which, like a huge sentinel, knee deep, stood a towering rock crowned with a fort, reminding one of a castle on a chess-board. (*Mr. Keegan's Elopement* 10)

17. Unlike Winston Spencer Churchill, who mentions in his memoirs that he stopped off briefly in Madeira on October 17th 1899 on his way to South Africa to report on the first Boer War for the *Morning Post*, he would not visit the island again for fifty years.

18. "In the summers of 1894, 1895, and 1896 the cadets' practice cruise was made in the full-rigged ship Monongahela and the new stream practice ship Bancroft, especially designed and built for use at the Naval Academy (…). The Monongahela was a barkentine-rigged sloop-of-war launched in 1862 which served as part of the Union Navy blockade during the civil war." (Magruder, "Naval Academy Practice Ships" 1934). The voyages would be suspended in 1898 due to the mobilisation of final-year naval cadets for the Spanish-American War but would be resumed the following year.



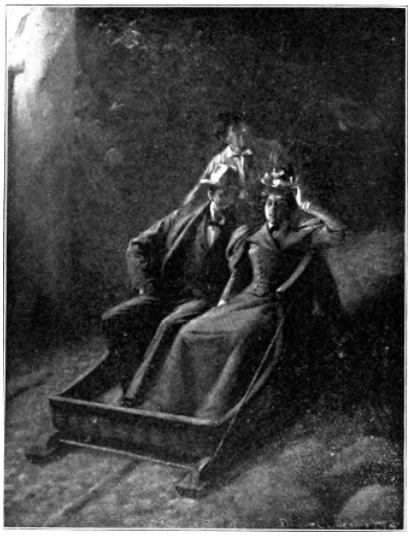


Fig.2 – (Left) "He sat back behind the curtains of his 'bulla-carta'". Fig.3 – (Right) "The Elopement"

Additionally, and although Clinedinst's illustrations are undoubtedly drawn from photographs,[19] the author offers a description, clearly based on personal experience, of the forms of transport which were unique to the island, some of which are still an attraction for tourists today:[20]

> A bulla-carta is in reality a covered sled, provided with curtains and drawn by two oxen (…). The streets of Funchal are paved with small lava-blocks set on end, and polished to such a degree that makes walking dangerous to people who wear the shoes of civilization. Hence the owners of the

19. Clinedinst's illustration of the "bulla-carta" (Fig.2) captures another unique feature of turn-of-the century Madeira – farm-labourers carrying heavy wineskins on their backs, down the cobbled alleyways from the high vineyards to the town far below. The other illustration (Fig. 3) shows the heroine, Eleanor Inglefield, riding in a wicker sled to meet Ensign Jack Pennington, her future husband, alongside one of the two non-commissioned officers who were involved in the conspiracy. (*Mr. Keegan's Elopement* 21 and 68)

20. Cable cars now take tourists up to beauty spots above the city. Toboggan sledges first originated in the early 19th century when they were used by the local residents as a means of downhill public transportation from the small village of Monte to Livramento in the city of Funchal. Monte was formerly a health resort for wealthy Europeans.

> bulla-cartas do a thriving business with foreigners, especially up the slope, where a false step is fraught with no inconsiderable consequences. (…) Few visit Madeira who do not take that delightful ride up the mountain on horseback and experience the delirium of the coast down, over the polished stones, in a wicker sled. (*Mr. Keegan's Elopement* 21)

But whilst the story confirms Churchill's favourable impressions of the remarkable natural setting of the picturesque town and his fascination with the ingenious solutions invented by the islanders to overcome the challenging terrain, not everything appears to have been to his liking. His characters display an arrogance towards foreigners which was not uncommon amongst turn-of-the-century Anglo-Americans and the word "dago", a depreciative epithet even then, is used on several occasions when addressing or referring to the local people.[21] A supposedly humorous remark made by "Jimmy Legs", the master-at-arms,[22] with regard to a local priest, reveals his ingrained distrust:

> The priest was descending at a pace which would have defied a trolley-car, but sat in his sled with as much equanimity as if he were pronouncing a benediction, his guide deftly balanced on the runners behind. "He's sure swift for a holy father!" the master-at-arms exclaimed aloud, lifting the curtains in order to obtain a better view of the vanishing figure; "but Dennis ain't hirin' him for the ceremony – you can't trust them Dagos even for splicin".[23] (*Mr. Keegan's Elopement* 22)

Xenophobic attitudes of this kind were not isolated occurrences in Churchill's novels, as Schneider emphasises in his critical study, *The Life and Thought of Winston Churchill*, which was published in 1976 during the post-Civil Rights era. Commenting on the author's treatment in *The Crisis* of German settlers in St. Louis who are vilified

21. The word "dago" was originally employed on board American ships in the early nineteenth century as an appellation for a deckhand of Spanish or Portuguese origin. It derived from the name Diego.
22. "Jimmy Legs" was the nickname given in those days to the master-at-arms aboard ship.
23. Splicing or the joining of two ropes or cables was a fairly menial task on board a naval vessel.

by aristocratic Southerners as "vulgar scum (…) smelling of sauerkraut and beer", Schneider points out that they received "considerably more respect" than Churchill conceded "to the later immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe." (53)

Unsurprisingly, Churchill was no less biased in his characterisations of black Americans,[24] for, as Schneider explains: "Racist feelings were more widespread and more respectable in America during these years than at any time in history, and Churchill shared them." (24) It should be remembered in this context that the Lily-White Movement[25] was particularly active in the Southern states and that the so-called "Jim Crow" segregation laws were still being introduced in the years when Winston Churchill was writing his historical novels.[26] Churchill's views regarding the superiority of the "Anglo-Saxon race" are also patent in some of his other works, especially in *The Crossing*. Schneider again points the finger of accusation:

> Given his belief in the justness of the Anglo-Saxon march to the sea, Churchill's attitude towards those who stood in the way is understandable. His picture of the Indian, like his characterization of the Negro was tinged with contemporary racism. His Indians follow the pioneer stereotype – crafty, cruel, easily cowed when brought face to face with a man like Clark[27] (…). The Anglo-Saxon – warlike, marching forward with irresistible power – had no time to worry about the destiny of inferior races. (74)

24. "All honor to those old time Negroes who are now memories, whose devotion to their masters was next to their love of God." (*The Crisis*, 312)
25. The Lily-White movement, at the end of the nineteenth century, was an attempt by a conservative faction of Southern Republicans to recover white voters who had defected to the Democratic Party because of what they saw as the increasing influence of black leaders in the Republican Party.
26. Many of the Southern states succeeded in passing racial segregation laws in the years before the turn of the century.
27. The reference is to the early American hero and "Indian-fighter" George Rogers Clark (1752-1818) who is one of the principal characters in the story.

The same notion of ethnic superiority is also present in two ostensibly "patriotic" articles published at the time of the Spanish-American War.[28] In "Admiral Dewey: A Character Sketch", published in *Review of Reviews* in June 1898, Schneider points out that Churchill "offers a glimpse of the Anglo-Saxon racism which he shared with his contemporaries: "(…) the American officer combines valuable qualities of his own with the necessary traits which are found in the English and other northern races (…)" whilst in "The Battle with Cervera's Fleet off Santiago", published in the same magazine in August 1898, "the outcome of the war was a foregone conclusion, since the Spaniards had made the mistake of challenging a nation of Anglo-Saxons." (*Apud* Schneider, 32)

Oddly enough, such attitudes were not incompatible with Churchill's relatively liberal brand of federalism and his somewhat puritanical Christian faith, both of which played increasingly significant roles in his life in the years immediately before the Great War.[29] Churchill was convinced at the time that nobility of character was the product of birth and bloodline rather than external factors[30] and in effect, the leading characters in his early stories all display the distinctive qualities and social behaviour that he associated with the Anglo-American aristocracy.[31] *Mr. Keegan´s Elopement* was no exception. Serenely confident, even in the entirely unexpected situation which confronts her, Eleanor Inglefield, the heroine, commands the admiration and respect of "her inferiors":

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28. Winston Churchill volunteered for active service in the U.S. Navy at the outbreak of hostilities but was not called for duty.

29. Several studies deal with Winston Churchill's brief political career in the Progressive Era before the Great War. One of the most interesting is Geoffrey Blodgett's "Winston Churchill. The Novelist as a Reformer" (*The New England Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 4, Dec.1974, 495-517).

30. Winston Churchill was not born "with a silver spoon in his mouth", however. His mother died three weeks after he was born and his father later confided him to a middle-class foster family in St. Louis. Destined for a career in "business", which he detested, Churchill managed to gain the support of a local politician who backed his successful candidature for the Naval Academy.

31. "Churchill, who admired and followed T.R. [Theodore Roosevelt] in practical politics, was in some respects his literary equivalent; he had a similar reverence for the American past, the same admiration for honorable old-family stock and old-family motives, the same contempt for the business mind, and the same weakness for wholesome and harmless clichés." (Hofstadter 1950, 15) As early as 1911, the literary critic Frederic Taber Cooper recognised that: "Mr. Churchill's heroes and heroines belong with hardly an exception to [the] dominant, self-sufficient class (…). The strong, primitive impulses and passions of their race, whether for good or bad, are no more to be changed by food or climate or higher mathematics than the color of their hair or eyes (…)." ("Winston Churchill"1911, 52-53)

> (…) tall and fair, with that wealth of colour peculiar to English women; and as she stood there in the twilight shading her eyes with her hand, the master-at-arms was transported with admiration (…). The ease and dignity of her bearing and the simplicity of her speech, completely mystified him (…). (25-26)

No less predictably, Ensign Jack Pennington, the reluctant hero, displays the qualities of leadership which were supposedly exclusive to his social class and ethnic origin:

> Under an apparent languor, and a seeming indifference to his own affairs and those of others, Pennington concealed qualities which made him, young as he was, one of the most efficient officers in the service. (38)

Churchill's enthusiasm for the specifically English product of "aristocratic breeding" would be dampened, however, during a second European tour he took with his wife in December 1901. It was on this trip that he met his namesake once again. After touring Italy and Germany, the Churchills arrived in London in early May 1902. Winston Spencer Churchill, then a Tory MP, arranged temporary honorary membership of the Pall Mall Club for his "American friend", and on the 14th May 1902 (at the Carlton Hotel) wrote inviting him to dine in the House of Commons, adding to his invitation, perhaps, insensitively: "your books are still praised here and I am loaded with spurious literary business". (*Apud* Schneider 62) The confusion regarding the authorship of their books was clearly, by then, no more than a nuisance to the Englishman, but it remained a constant source of profound irritation to his American namesake[32] and undoubtedly

32. Clearly peeved about the persistent confusion regarding authorship, the American complained bitterly in his notes about the occasion: "Considering the fact that when he came to America I dropped my work and went to see him and gave a supper in his honour, he has acted like a cad (…) I was not his guest but one of the guests of a club called the Hooligans which meets on Thursday evenings. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman sat on Churchill's right. I on his left." (*Apud* Schneider 62) Schneider was quoting Churchill's notebook in the Creighton Churchill Collection. Churchill's Papers are now held, in the main, at Dartmouth College. In fact the American author had dined in the Commons on 29th May 1902 with a group of backbenchers from the Conservative Party who were dissatisfied with the leadership of Arthur Balfour. They were nicknamed the "Hughligans", as one of the leading figures was Hugh Cecil, later Lord Quickswood. Winston Spencer Churchill would cross the House to join the Liberals in 1904 and was given much of the credit for Campbell-Bannerman's election victory in 1905.

coloured his impressions of England and the people he met. Though lavishly entertained wherever he went, Churchill quickly became disenchanted with the English class system and noted in his datebook: "it is hard to respect a nation which must have a class to worship, and which adds to an already inane body a still more inane set of toadies". (*Apud* Schneider 62)

On their return from Europe in June 1902, and after a brief visit to St. Louis, the Churchills settled down to live at Harlakenden House, the mansion they had built in a hundred acres of parkland near Cornish, New Hampshire, which was becoming something of a haven for writers and artists.[33] Over the next few years Churchill would play an active role in New England politics and, as a consequence of his experiences, his writing began to focus on the contemporary issues that so-called "muckraking" writers were bringing to the public eye.[34] Published in 1906, two years after *The Crossing*, *Coniston* traces the career of Jethro Bass, a local "political boss" – a character based on the well-known figure of Ruel Durkee, who had been a leading figure in New Hampshire politics a generation earlier. Set in the second half of the nineteenth century, the story reflects Churchill's distaste for the corporate lobbies which then, as now, played an influential and pernicious role in both state and federal decisions.[35]

Coniston was followed in 1908 by *Mr. Crewe's Career*, which picked up the story of state politics where Churchill had left it in his previous book.[36] Inspired by his own experiences in the state legislature, the

33. The palatial mansion, which had been built largely on the earnings of Churchill's early novels, served for three years – between 1913 and 1915 – as Woodrow Wilson's summer White House but by then it had become a burden to his wife, who was having periods of ill-health, and sadly would be destroyed by fire in 1923.

34. John Chamberlain, in *Farewell to Reform, the Rise, Life and Decay of the Progressive Mind in America* (1932), suggests that Churchill, once again, had perceived the change in public taste, finding himself "thrown suddenly into a decade whose popular clamor was for muck", but Robert Schneider argues that the author was now writing not what the public wanted to hear but what "he thought they should hear." (151) See also Schneider 1976, 96 and Titus, "The Progressivism of the Muckrakers: A Myth re-examined through Fiction", 10-16.

35. See Churchill, *Coniston* (1906). Illustrated by Florence Scovel Shinn (1871-1940).

36. See Churchill, *Mr. Crewe's Career* (1908). The novel was adapted for the stage by the playwright and screenwriter Marion Fairfax (1875-1970) and was performed, for the first time, in December 1908 at the Hyperion Theatre in New Haven, Conn..

story revolves around a railway corporation's attempt to dominate a state and was criticised by some reviewers as reading far more like a political tract than a novel, despite the fact that Churchill had gone to considerable lengths to introduce irony and humour into the narrative and, as always, had included a romantic element in the plot. Both *Coniston* and its sequel quickly became best-sellers and would undermine the course of Churchill's political career by "making him an anathema both to the state Republican Party and to the railroad which dominated that party." (Schneider 1976, 95)[37]

Winston Churchill had come a long way since his first incipient short stories and perhaps, for the first time, he was being taken seriously as a writer – not just by some of the more demanding literary critics[38] but by fellow authors such as Upton Sinclair (1878-1968), who wrote congratulating him warmly on *Coniston* and enclosing his own book *The Industrial Republic*.[39] It was the first of several letters they would exchange over the next few years. Sinclair wrote again to Churchill praising *Mr. Crewe's Career*, and forwarded works by other authors on the subject of Socialism, undoubtedly in the hope that Churchill would come to share his views on the solution to the problems of American society.[40]

37. Churchill made little effort to disguise the fact that he was referring to his home state, New Hampshire and the Boston and Maine Railroad.

38. The reviews were far from unanimous, however. Frederic Cooper, though complimentary in many aspects, pointed out that whereas Churchill's novels were undoubtedly the work of much research and laborious revision he seemed "to have drawn the line", stylistically speaking, after Thackeray, as if no other author existed. See Cooper, *Winston Churchill*, 1911. Three years later, J. C. Underwood would defend Churchill and his works against Cooper's insinuations in "Winston Churchill and Civic Righteousness", part of a series of essays on authors including Mark Twain, Edith Wharton and Henry James. See Underwood, *Literature and Insurgency. Ten studies in racial evolution: Mark Twain, Henry James, William Dean Howells, Frank Norris, David Graham Phillips, Stewart Edward White, Winston Churchill, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Atherton, and Robert W. Chambers* (1914, 299-345).

39. See Sinclair, *The Industrial Republic* (1907).

40. They included J.A. Hobson's *Social Problems* and William E. Walling's *Larger Aspect of Socialism*.

By then Churchill was engrossed in the completion of a new novel, *A Modern Chronicle*,[41] which tells the story of Honora Leffingwell, "a modern woman", who, after moving from St. Louis to Paris and surviving disillusionment and two divorces, finally marries her childhood sweetheart in a well-deserved happy ending.[42] Virtuous and strong-willed, as his heroines always were, Honora was a far cry from the idealised, aristocratic, fair-skinned damsels who enchanted Churchill's early readers, and would be compared favourably to Thackeray's Becky Sharp by certain critics, who considered *A Modern Chronicle* to be his best novel "largely because of the heroine".[43] However, either because it was ahead of its time, or perhaps out of step with the somewhat conservative views of Churchill's readers, the book took considerably longer to achieve the best-selling status of his previous novels.

Following Sinclair's recommendations, Churchill was reading everything he could lay his hands on by the British socialist and economic scientist J.A. Hobson (1858-1940), who became one of his favourite authors. By 1910, however, Churchill, who had been brought up an Episcopalian, had undergone something of a spiritual rebirth and was now convinced that political and economic reforms were insufficient and that it would require the mediation of a dogma-free religion to solve the social problems which plagued America.

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41. In a curious link to Churchill's first published story, Chapter II of *A Modern Chronicle* is entitled "Perdita Recalled". Perdita was the name of the cook of the Inglefield family in Madeira in *Mr. Keegan´s Elopement*: "Perdita may have had such dreams. She had been born, she knew, in some wondrous land by the shores of the summer seas, not at all like St. Louis, and friends and relatives had not hesitated to remark in her hearing that she resembled her father – that handsome father who surely must have been a prince, whose before-mentioned photograph in the tortoise-shell frame was on the bureau in her little room." Possibly one of Churchill's recurring recollections.

42. As the academic Charles Child Walcutt wryly put it a generation later: Honora was "compelled by overpowering love to flout the codes of society" and though a "noble soul" who "suffers for her sin" she is finally "richly rewarded for the good that was in her." (*American Literary Naturalism, a Divided Stream* 1956, 162-163). See also Schneider 1976, 166.

43. The anonymous critic of the *New York Times* wrote: "In our time it is the heroine who carries the pennon and rides the high steed ambition (…) for she rides with her clear gaze on the goal and she rides fast". ("A Girl´s Visions and her Career. Winston Churchill contributes a fascinating Study of American Womanhood in the Making" April 10th 1910) It is possible that Churchill was encouraged to focus the novel on a "modern woman" by his wife, Mabel, who, like her mother and grandmother before her, was an active supporter of female suffrage in New Hampshire, where the couple had settled. White women were granted the right to vote in the United States in 1920 but women of other ethnic groups only in 1965.

From then on he would throw the weight of his literary reputation behind the activists of the Social Gospel movement in their struggle with orthodox Protestantism, an issue which would occupy much of his writing and thought until his death in 1947.

The first sign that Churchill's approach to his work had changed was a new novel, *The Inside of the Cup*, which appeared in 1912 in serial form in *Hearst's Magazine*. Macmillan's hard-back edition would be published the following year.[44] Based on the Social Gospel teachings of Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918),[45] the story hinges on the conversion of the Rev. John Hodder, the rector of an inner-city church in the Mid-West, from his earlier Episcopalian beliefs to a more liberal, socially-engaged form of Christianity and the gradual realisation that his church was financed by local business leaders who were firmly against change. Possibly as a concession to the expectations of his loyal readers, Churchill introduced an element which infuriated religious reviewers, especially those of the Catholic faith – a romance between Hodder and Alison Parr, the daughter of one of the unscrupulous businessmen who were the targets of the rector's campaign. *The Inside of the Cup* heralded a profound change in the motivation behind Churchill's writing. Now no longer in search of literary fame or financial success, he had embraced a mission – to bring about the "Kingdom of God" on earth – a cooperative brotherhood of Man under the guidance and authority of a benevolent Christian Government.

Churchill's final novels, *A Far Country* and *The Dwelling-Place of Light*, both serialised in *Hearst´s Magazine* before appearing as hard-back versions in 1915 and 1917, were inspired by his new-found, utopian beliefs. Based on the Biblical parable of "the prodigal son",

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44. See Churchill, *The Inside of the Cup* (1913). Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg (1877-1960).

45. Rauschenbusch, one of the founders of the Social Gospel movement, which was so much in vogue during the so-called "Progressive Era", wrote to Churchill thanking him for the book: "Allow me to thank you personally for the contribution you have made to a task with which my whole working life has been more or less bound up. I feel with you that the emancipation of the individual must come through religion, mere economic changes do not change the personality at the core. Also that the Church contains tremendous reservoirs of power and can approach all classes of men along lines which no other organization can utilize in the same way." (WR to WC July 28th 1913, *apud* Schneider 1976, 175)

A Far Country[46] follows the life and career of Hugh Paret from youth to manhood, showing how his profession as a corporation lawyer gradually changes his values. Predictably, Paret would finally see the "error of his ways" and return to the straight and narrow path of corporate virtue. Like society as a whole, all that was required, was for Paret, a victim of circumstances and ambition, to open his eyes and embrace reform. The characters in *A Far Country*, like those in the parables, are no more than vehicles for ideas[47] and Churchill's underlying message is that the key to the transformation of society is not Socialism or Syndicalism, as Upton Sinclair believed, but moral regeneration.

By the time *A Far Country* was released, Churchill was already deeply involved in writing *The Dwelling Place of Light*, which would be his last work of fiction.[48] The title of the novel was again a reference to the Bible – this time from the book of Job. (Job 38:19) The theme, however, had been suggested to him by Sinclair, in June 15th 1913, after reading the *Inside of the Cup*: "Let me suggest a book for Winston Churchill to write. (…) go and study one of those big strikes. (…) Tell the story of a young man whose father owns the mill; and let him meet an I.W.W.[49] girl (…) I'm giving you one of my themes – or offering it; the reason being that you could do it better than I." (*Apud* Schneider 1976, 205-206) Churchill had declined to take up Sinclair's challenge at first but at the insistence of George Brett, his editor, he eventually decided to tackle the role of organised labour in society – the burning social issue in the United States in the years immediately before American forces joined the Great War.

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46. See Churchill, "A Far Country (*Hearts's Magazine*, vols. XXVII-XXVIII, April 1914-July 1915) and *A Far Country* (1915), illustrated by Herman Pfeifer.

47. Writing in the *New York Times*, the author and critic Hildegarde Hawthorne was unequivocal: "(…) He is not a psychologist, his characters are negligible as revelations of the human soul, you see them merely from the outside. The important thing in Mr. Churchill's books is himself; his point of view, his observation of conditions, his conclusions and explanations. As a literary artist he may be said not to exist; as a voice on matters that are vitally important to us as Americans he is immensely important." ("Winston Churchill's Story of America", *NYT* June 6th 1915. *Apud* Schneider 1976, 211)

48. See Churchill, "The Dwelling-Place of Light" (*Hearst´s Magazine*, vols. XXX-XXI, Nov.1916 -Nov, 1917) and *The Dwelling-Place of Light* (1917) with a frontispiece by A. I. Keller.

49. The International Workers of the World (IWW) was a militant labour organisation which was particularly active in the United States before the Great War and had ramifications in Canada, Britain and Australia.

The novel is set in a Massachusetts mill town against the backdrop of a strike which pits the workers, led by the union man Rolfe, against the management, personified by the cynical Claude Ditmar, who has done away with older and more humane methods and intensified the exploitation of the already hard-pressed workforce. The tone of optimism which was an intrinsic feature of all of Churchill's previous novels has gone – there would be no redemption at the crossroads, either for the unscrupulous Ditmar or the self-seeking Rolfe. Churchill had finally been forced to admit to himself that society was irrevocably divided into opposing camps, rather than moving inexorably forward towards peace and salvation as in all of his earlier stories.

The plot, however, rather than a means of exposing the ills of unrestrained capitalism as Sinclair had undoubtedly hoped, revolves around the figure of Janet Bumpus, the elder daughter of an old New England family which has seen better days, and who is now a stenographer at the Mill. An attractive young woman, she is employed for her looks by Ditmar and eventually, she, like her younger sister, falls prey to his attentions and they both become pregnant. Driven by personal revolt Janet is drawn to the strikers and their struggle, and is attracted to the union leader Rolfe, whose morality and standards she discovers are no different from those of his adversary. Both were gripped by lust and both were striving for material advantage. The atmosphere of the novel, as Schneider perceptively points out, is Victorian, and for the first time one of Churchill's heroines is made to pay for her sins and to die in the pages of the story.[50] It was Churchill's way of rejecting both Capitalism and Syndicalism, which he viewed as the two sides of the same coin, a position which would leave neither his readers nor the majority of the critics entirely satisfied.

Winston Churchill's loyal readers had come to expect his stories both to entertain and to offer hope that the evils of Society would be overcome in the course of time. When he allowed his writing to be infected by his growing pessimism and began to preach to them they turned elsewhere. Churchill would gradually withdraw from public life after 1917

50. See Schneider 1976, 218.

and despite having worked for several years on a political novel "The Green Bay Tree", set in Washington D.C., he eventually lost interest in the story line and in 1923 he finally admitted to Brett that he had put an end to novel writing. Churchill would publish nothing further until "The Uncharted Way" – his personal religious philosophy, in 1940.

Nothing remains of the American novelist's visit to Madeira except the story he wrote, whereas his namesake's brief stay half a century later, is celebrated by the statue and the hotel which bears his name in Câmara de Lobos, the picturesque village where he placed his easel.

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