

**PROPHETS OF THE
NINETEENTH
CENTURY; CARLYLE,
RUSKIN, TOLSTOI**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649682607

Prophets of the Nineteenth Century; Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoi by May Alden Ward

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MAY ALDEN WARD

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THOMAS CARLYLE

Prophets
of the
Nineteenth Century

Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoi

By May Alden Ward

Author of "Life of Dante," "Petrarch,"
"Old Colony Days," etc.

London
Gay and Bird
22 Bedford Street, Strand
1900

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UNIVERSITY PRESS • JOHN WILSON
AND SON • CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

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PREFATORY NOTE

***B**EFORE Carlyle died he said that John Ruskin was the only man in England who was carrying out his ideas; and Ruskin said recently that Tolstoi is the one man in the world who stands for the movement which he had tried to further. Was there this relation between these three men, so different in all their personal attributes? So far as the two former are concerned there can be no doubt of it, for the relation was direct and organic. Carlyle was twenty-four years old at the time of Ruskin's birth, and had reached the zenith of his influence before Ruskin had com-*

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pleted the early art writings which gave him his reputation. During this time Ruskin had been steadily coming under the influence of Carlyle, but about the time he attained forty, Carlyle's influence became so predominant that he desired to recall his early work and begin over again. He actually allowed his art works to go out of print, though there was nothing in them which he had any reason to regret, or which was in any way antagonistic to the teachings of Carlyle. Both men had really been working at the same problems, though in entirely different methods. Ruskin now came to feel that Carlyle's method was better, and therefore he took his new departure in the direction of his economic experiments for the betterment of the people, by means of improving their environment. To this end

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he cheerfully devoted his private fortune of nearly a million dollars which he had inherited from his father. In this last act we may see a close relation to the teachings and practice of Tolstoi. Though the relation with Tolstoi is less direct, and probably not at all organic, it is none the less real; since a spiritual sympathy through the contagion of ideas, may furnish a bond of the most lasting kind. By such a fellowship these three men are absolutely united,—three social reformers working toward the highest ends; and, in spite of local differences, toward almost the same end. With what difficulties they contended and with what struggles of soul they reached their new gospel, of the mission of man to his fellow, the story of each must tell; but there is no longer room to doubt that to each of them it was a

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gospel, uttered with as complete a sincerity as any that ever came to the heart of man ; and as truly has it proved prophetic of the great movement which is now sweeping over the world, proclaiming the coming of sweetness, and joy, and comfort to human life, through the surrender of luxury, greed, and vulgarity. The false gods may fight hard and tarry long, but their disguise is now torn from them. Henceforth they must masquerade in their true character.