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ROBERT OWEN

VOL. I





ROBERT OWEN

*A BIOGRAPHY*

By FRANK PODD

Author of "Modern Spiritualism"  
in Psychological Research

WITH SEVEN ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS  
TWO OF WHICH ARE THE PLATES AND TABLES

New York  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1907

# ROBERT OWEN

*A BIOGRAPHY* \* \*

By FRANK PODMORE

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in Psychical Research," etc.

WITH FORTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS,  
TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES, AND FACSIMILES

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## P R E F A C E

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**R**OBERT OWEN died in 1858. Up to January, 1905, four biographies of him, and four only, had appeared, all in English—the last having been written more than twenty years ago.<sup>1</sup> When, in 1901, I formed the intention of adding another to the list, I was moved less by a sense of the inadequacy of the work of my predecessors, than by my own desire to treat of so congenial a theme. In a word, I made up my mind, as I supposed, to write because I wanted to write. But a subsequent series of coincidences has led me to question whether in following my own pleasure I was not the unconscious instrument of larger forces, and the impulse which I held at the time to be the spontaneous outcome of my own volition part of a wider movement in the world of thought, the existence of which I had scarcely suspected.

<sup>1</sup> *Robert Owen and his Social Philosophy*, by W. L. Sargant, 1860.

*Robert Owen . . . the Founder of Socialism in England*, by A. J. Booth, M.A., 1869.

*Life of Robert Owen*, Philadelphia, 1866 (published anonymously, but since acknowledged to be by F. A. Packard).

*The Life, Times and Labours of Robert Owen*, by Lloyd Jones, first edition (posthumous), 1889. Lloyd Jones died in 1886.

There is also a small pamphlet, *Life and Last Days of Robert Owen*, by G. J. Holyoake, 1859.

Worship 26 Feb 1885

For, a few months after I had definitely formulated my own project, I learnt that another Englishman, who subsequently withdrew in my favour, was entertaining the same idea. Again, in the course of 1903, whilst my own work was scarcely begun, I made the acquaintance successively of a German lady, Fraülein Simon, and a Frenchman, M. Edouard Dolléans, who had conceived, about the same time as myself, the idea of writing a biography of the great Socialist.<sup>1</sup> In the previous year, 1902, appeared the first adequate account—for which the world had been content to wait for three-quarters of a century—of Owen's great Communal Experiment at New Harmony.<sup>2</sup> And finally, when the present book was already far advanced, a collection of letters written to or by Owen, which had been lost sight of for more than a generation, was found in a lumber-room and forwarded to the late G. J. Holyoake, by whom it was handed on for safe keeping to the Co-operative Union at Manchester. The timely discovery of this correspondence, of which I have made such use as my opportunities permitted, furnishes a retrospective justification—if further justification is needed—for the project formed five years ago.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both these lives have already appeared. *Robert Owen: sein Leben und seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart*, by Helene Simon. Jena, 1905. *Robert Owen*, by Edouard Dolléans. Paris, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Harmony Communities*, by George Browning Lockwood.

<sup>3</sup> All the letters quoted in the following pages, when no other source is indicated, are in this Collection, which is not yet catalogued. The letters date from the year 1823, and include a few written to or by Owen on his tour in Ireland in that year. From the fact that the letters begin just where the Autobiography leaves off, it seems probable that

Amongst those who have assisted me to obtain information, and have lent or given valuable books and documents, I have to render special thanks to Mr. T. Parry Jones, of Newtown—the place of Owen's birth and of his death—to Mr. William George Black, Professor Earl Barnes, Mr. J. C. Gray, Secretary of the Co-operative Union, Mr. A. Dransfield, of the Working-Men's Institute and Public Library, New Harmony, Indiana, Mrs. Templeton, Mr. William Tebb, Mr. C. Godfrey Gumpel, Mr. C. S. Loch and the Council of the Charity Organisation Society. To other friends I render cordial acknowledgment for help given.

the letters form part of the material collected by Owen in his life-time for the purpose of his Autobiography. I have found only two letters dated before 1823 (both of which are referred to in the following pages), and these evidently owe their preservation to the date, which is very indistinct in each case, having been misread. The Collection includes a bundle containing several hundred letters written by Owen during the last seven or eight years of his life to his personal friend, attendant and factotum, James Rigby. Most of the letters, some 3,000 in all, are docketed by Rigby, but in a few cases the docket is in the handwriting of William Pare.

F. P.

*March, 1906.*





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