

Discuss A tale of two cities as a great historical novel or historical tragedy.

**Introduction** — A tale of two cities is regarded as one of the greatest historical novels ever written by Charles Dickens. It is his social historical novel and the main subject of it was the French Revolution. We observe that Dickens is very careful regarding the verification of historical facts. The scholar novelist gives more importance to the humanistic side of historical events. The first historical novel of Dickens was Barnaby Rudge in which he describe the story of the Gordon Riots, led by George Gordon, these Riots happened in London and the parliament was compelled to repeal the act of 1778 for the relief of the Roman Catholics.

For writing a historical novel, it is essential to verify the facts that are related to history. Whenever any reference is made to the deplorable condition of the French people before or during the French Revolution. It is based on the faith of trust worthy witnesses. Dickens studied Carlyle's famous book, "French Revolution again and again was highly impressed".

**Condition in England** —

At the time of Dickens England was highly touched by the spirit of democracy. A political Revolution in which political power was wrested from the hands of king and the court by parliament

and started the reformation. Despite that the real spirit of democracy was absent from England. The political and social conditions of England were far better than in France or any country of Europe. It was because of the highest opinion of the upper class people who displayed great interest in the improvement of the social conditions of the middle and lower class of people. Dickens highlights the social and political scene of England in the Victorian age and declares obviously that the chief conflict was between the haves and have-nots.

### Condition Of France —

The social and political scene of France was worse than that of England.

Though the democratic spirit had started to touch the political walks of France, the French parliament was regarded as the assembly of lay and clergy of land honours. The clergy men and nobels were exempted from the taxes but the charges of taxes upon the common men were doubled and redoubled. In this way there was a great sense of dissatisfaction upon them.

The exploitation of the lower and the middle class people at the hands of upper class society was not only obvious in the taxation policy, but also in the policy of employment for the high government post.

Harsh realistics as the source of the french Revolution —

Indeed, Dickens penned a tale of two cities with the historical background of the french revolution. While writing the novel, the novelist kept direct touched with french and English history of that time. In those days the common french life of aristocracy added to the general difficulties of the people. The reign of Louis XVI was very tumultuous and full of restlessness. He was a slowwitted, sleepy and self-indulgent king. There was the worst disorder everywhere in France. There was a financial mismanagement throughout France. The declaration of first republic was made in France on Sep. 20, 1792 and but the terrorism continued till July 1794 and indeed with the end of Robespierre, the most gifted and grandest revolutionary figure of the period of french history.

The American war of independence also influenced the french people the slogan of liberty which American used for the struggle of this freedom encourage the french to fight against the aristocracy.

Conclusion — In this novel, the novelist devotes many pages to the exploitation, of the poor at the hands of aristocracy. Later on, he discusses the fury of the revolutionaries who also committed some evil deeds, Dickens himself admits the influences of Caries and the historical background of the novel in his preface to a tale of two cities, whenever any reference is made to the conditions of french people before or during the Revolution, it is truly

made, on the faith of truth-worthy witness.

It has been one of my hopes and something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book."