

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

B. A. , PART-II, PAPER- SUBSIDIARY

TOPIC – **A TALE OF TWO CITIES**

BY DR. PRABHAT RANJAN KARN

ASSOC. PROF., DEPT. OF ENGLISH,

DR. L. K. V. D.COLLEGE, TAJPUR

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

QUESTION- Justify the title of the novel, “A Tale of Two Cities”.

Ans.- So far as it is the matter of the justification of the title of the novel, it is apt and satisfactory. The title of a novel must be short and suggestive. It must have the capability of reflecting the atmosphere and spirit of the theme of the novel. From this viewpoint, the title of the novel, “A Tale of Two Cities” is just and satisfactory.

Obviously, the title of the novel is short. It also suggests the atmosphere and spirit of the novel because the scenes of the story are laid in London and Paris. The novel deals with the English and French incidents and characters equally.

In the beginning while brooding over the title of the novel, Dickens first thought “Buried Alive” which in his opinion was not fit. Then he suggested the second title after the character of the doctor. This title was also rejected by him. Further he thought that the main theme of the novel deals uniformly with the sufferings of three characters, Dr. Manette, Charles Darney and Sydney Carton. Neither of these three characters dominates over the other and all of them have been given the similar weightage. The novel, therefore, could not assume its title after either of the characters. So the title “A Tale of Two Cities” replaced all such titles.

We find that in the plot of the novel two themes are intertwined – first, of the French Revolution and second, of human love. This plot is presented against a realistic

background of certain well known historical events and tendencies of the late 18th century. Because of this background the plot provides a unity and pervasiveness to the stories of the different characters. At the same time the title appears to unify the social and political pictures, so it is fully suggestive . The scenes of the novel move between London and Paris, we get ample knowledge of the various conditions of the two cities. In this way finally we may say that the title of the novel, “A Tale of Two Cities” is fully satisfactory and justified, if not the best.
